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NIETZSCHE AND THE FRENCH

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NIETZSCHE AND THE FRENCH

A Study of the influence of Nietzsche's French reading on his thought and writing

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TO MY MOTHER

PREFACE

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W. D. W.

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INTRODUCTION

I

NIETZSCHE'S development has generally been interpreted as falling into three main stages. The early period Charles Andler called 'aesthetic pessimism', in which adoration of Greek civilization is coupled with an aesthetic and tragic attitude to life, by which the pessimism of Schopenhauer is joined to the invocation of the god Dionysos and his modern representative Wagner. These years, from 1869 to 1876, saw the publication of the *Geburt der Tragödie* and the four *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*. In the second period, from 1876 to 1881, this attitude is apparently exchanged for an unashamed positivism which was sharply critical of all idealism and which substituted the search for truth for the creation of beauty as man's highest activity. During this time Nietzsche composed the two parts of *Menschliches Allzumenschliches* and *Morgenröthe*. Then, from 1881 until his madness in 1888, his work shows, in its last period, the character generally associated with his teaching—the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, the conception of the Superman, the division of mankind into 'lords' and 'slaves', with its corresponding double system of morality, and the return to the worship of Dionysos. The works from this period are those best known—*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, *Die Genealogie der Moral*, the two Wagner-pamphlets, *Götzendämmerung*, *Der Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, with the *Wille zur Macht* left in the form of fragments. This tripartite division of his thought is useful as a help to understanding and ordering his work, so long as it is not allowed to obscure the consistent growth of his ideas throughout his life. For the more we investigate him the more we are struck, not by the contradictions and inconsistencies of his mental development, but rather by its unity, by the organic nature of the progress through the years. The work as a whole follows surprisingly consistently a direction set from the start.

This direction has been variously defined. Bertram sees Nietzsche's task as the creation of a mythology, a system of beliefs and aspirations which can serve as a guide to mankind in the wastes of present-day scientific materialism and empiricism. Father Copleston urges that Nietzsche's effort was to create a system of values, to set a goal to

which men may aspire and for which they must cultivate themselves. These two theses are not in contradiction, only they emphasize different aspects of the same thing. But perhaps one may define Nietzsche's direction in still another and illuminating way by seeing in it a sustained search for a religion to fit modern man, a search for God. This may seem surprising in view of the blasphemous and distorted attacks on Christianity in his works, yet, as so often with Nietzsche, his fury in attack here is the direct result of his awareness that the whole Christian tradition touches his own problems and his own questioning too nearly to be sidestepped, and his own final attitude to life is essentially religious, not 'humanistic'.

In this study we are concerned with one of the many influences which determined his development—that of his reading of French literature. A large part of his work starts from an analysis of modern culture and its history, and perhaps the most striking thing about this analysis is that at every period of his life—except before 1871, when his gaze was still fixed exclusively on the Greeks—it is predominantly French culture to which he turns for examples and on which his views are mainly based. Seeing the culture of the last four centuries as an example of that decadence which he finally regarded as the sign-manual of modern man, he seems to find in France not only the most pronounced manifestations of this very decadence but also the most nearly successful efforts to combat it. At every turn he sees the ideals which found expression for all time in ancient Greek art and civilization crumbling away before the onslaught of the second-rate and the mediocre. For a time, at the Renaissance, they were in part revived, and again in the seventeenth century, but the development of history was too strong for them and now he can see only a bourgeois, philistine desire to gloss things over, coupled with the most arrogant pretensions to beauty and truth and pandering only to the effete half-educated mediocrity of present-day Europe. Some men have stood out against the decline, and we find them recurring again and again in Nietzsche's thought. Napoleon was one, and for a time he thought Schopenhauer was, and also Wagner. And continually, the whole body of French moralists, from Montaigne to Stendhal. Such men seem to justify for Nietzsche the history of the last centuries, and he goes to them to breathe again the clean air of the Greeks. It is important to note that Pascal, the spearhead of the Christian opposition to the Greeks, is also such a man, for whom Nietzsche feels always a profound admiration even when most savagely attacking him. French culture represented always for Nietzsche the

supreme expression of the modern spirit and as such was a touchstone on which he tested all his theories and a fruitful source of thought.

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At the outbreak of the war in 1870 he shared the common view that the French were effete and nerveless, and that it was the task of the young and strong Germany to reinvigorate European culture in the spirit of the Ancients, which Wagner and Schopenhauer so finely exemplified. But this view did not survive the victory of 1871; the first *Unzeitgemässe* (1873) sounds the warning which is to loom so large throughout Nietzsche's work:

> Es kann nur eine Verwechselung sein, wenn man von dem Siege der deutschen Bildung und Kultur spricht, eine Verwechselung, die darauf beruht, dass in Deutschland der reine Begriff der Kultur verloren gegangen ist (VI, 135).

In this and the following essay he shows how much the present philistinism in Germany is to be attributed to the slavish imitation of French models. We can almost hear again the fulminations of Lessing as we read Nietzsche's strictures on the Germans who conquered the French and can now find nothing better to do than ape the people they affect to despise.

In this period we can detect three streams of thought in his appreciation of French culture: his admiration of Rousseau, whom he singles out, in the essay on Schopenhauer, as one of the three possible human ideals, his delight in the charm and cogency of Voltaire, who later becomes for a time his chief intellectual guide, and lastly, more important, his delight in the non-rationalist tradition of French culture, the emphasis on the strength and uniqueness of the human individual which is at the roots of French classicism. Montaigne is an example of this quality, and he ranks Montaigne even higher than Schopenhauer. He is not tempted to equate the French spirit either on the one hand with the analytic temper of the Cartesian tradition, nor, on the other, with the intuitive method and outlook of Rousseau and the romantics, but sees also, crowning and informing all, the burning interest in the mystery of the human personality which inspires Montaigne, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Stendhal and the French nineteenth-century psychologists whom he was later to study deeply.

Some idea of the importance he ascribed to French authors can be

gained from two passages in *Menschliches*. The first occurs at the end of *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (1879):

Die Hadesfahrt: Auch ich bin in der Unterwelt gewesen, wie Odysseus, und werde es noch öfter sein, und nicht nur Hammel habe ich geopfert, um mit einigen Todten reden zu können, sondern des eignen Blutes nicht geschont. Vier Paare waren es, welche sich mir, dem Opfernden, nicht versagten: Epikur und Montaigne, Goethe und Spinoza, Plato und Rousseau, Pascal und Schopenhauer. Mit diesen muss ich mich auseinandersetzen, wenn ich lange allein gewandert bin, von ihnen will ich mir Recht und Unrecht geben lassen, ihnen will ich zuhören, wenn sie sich dabei selber untereinander Recht und Unrecht geben. Was ich auch nur sage, beschliesse, für mich und Andere ausdenke: auf jene Acht hefte ich die Augen und sehe die Ihrigen auf mich geheftet. — Mögen die Lebenden es mir verzeihen, wenn *sie* mir mitunter wie die Schatten vorkommen, so verblichen und verdriesslich, so unruhig und ach! so lüstern nach Leben: während Jene mir dann so lebendig scheinen, als ob sie nun, *nach* dem Tode, nimmermehr lebensmüde werden könnten. Auf *die ewige Lebendigkeit* aber kommt es an: was ist am 'ewigen Leben' und überhaupt am Leben gelegen! (sect. 408; IX, 174 f.).

Nietzsche regards these thinkers as a challenge: he will have to 'settle with' them. And his whole life is indeed spent in seeking a view of life which could stand with theirs. This passage is remarkable for the light it throws on the central position he ascribes to French writers. In the *Wanderer* (1879) there is another elaboration of this theme:

Man ist beim Lesen von Montaigne La Rochefoucauld La Bruyère Fontenelle (namentlich der Dialogues des morts) Vauvenargues Chamfort dem Alterthum näher als bei irgendwelcher Gruppe von sechs Autoren andrer Völker. Durch jene Sechs ist der *Geist der letzten Jahrhunderte* der *alten* Zeitrechnung wieder erstanden — sie zusammen bilden ein wichtiges Glied in der grossen noch fortlaufenden Kette der Renaissance —. . . sie enthalten mehr *wirkliche Gedanken* als alle Bücher deutscher Philosophen zusammengenommen (sect. 214; IX, 295).

Plainly he sees the Frenchmen as the inheritors of the Greeks, preserving something of their joy and tragic clarity, of their reverence for human strength and individuality. A revealing note from the time of *Morgenröthe* (1881) makes clear one important trait which he sees exemplified in them:

Von einem Gedanken *glühen*, von ihm verbrannt werden — das ist französisch. Der Deutsche bewundert sich und stellt sich mit seiner Passion vor den Spiegel und ruft andere hinzu (*Nachlass* XI, 108).

This is one aspect of his appreciation of the French—his admiration for the capacity to think with the whole man in contrast to the German sham intellectuality which is apart and independent of the

thinker. The other side of the medal is perhaps best expressed by this passage from the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882):

'Der esprit ungriechisch — Die Griechen sind in allem ihrem Denken unbeschreiblich logisch und schlicht; sie sind dessen, wenigstens für ihre lange gute Zeit, nicht überdrüssig geworden, wie die Franzosen es so häufig werden: welche gar zu gern einen kleinen Sprung in's Gegentheil machen und den Geist der Logik eigentlich nur vertragen, wenn er durch eine Menge solcher kleiner Sprünge in's Gegentheil seine *gesellige* Artigkeit, seine gesellige Selbstverleugnung verräth. Logik erscheint ihnen als nothwendig wie Brod und Wasser, aber auch gleich diesen als eine Art Gefangenenkost, sobald sie rein und allein genossen werden sollen. In der guten Gesellschaft muss man niemals vollständig und allein Recht haben wollen, wie es alle reine Logik will: daher die kleine Dosis Unvernunft in allem französischen esprit (sect. 82; XII, 109).

This is more than a simple appreciation of the essentially *social* nature of French thought and art, of the ideal of the *honnête homme*, of living rather than thinking. It is surprising, on the face of it, that Nietzsche sees the contrast so clearly between this attitude and that of the Greeks. In other places he sees the superiority of the latter as lying in something quite other than logic. But at this time (1882), just emerging from his 'positivistic' period, he is carrying through a sustained criticism of all cultural artistic and moral ideals, and his idol and chief model is the logical Socrates himself. This explains why the illogical anti-intellectual quality in French culture appears to him now as blameworthy, and this makes his characterization of the French in these terms all the more remarkable. This very quality, the appreciation of unpredictable illogicality and mystery in thought and feeling, is present in the great French writers to a degree rarely found elsewhere, and it is this which Nietzsche isolates. Such a description of French culture is doubly revealing, since it could almost be applied to Nietzsche himself, whose thought is continually making 'Sprünge ins Gegentheil', though not, of course, from social motives, and since it lays bare quite clearly one of the main qualities which were to him unique in the French. He sees in them a strain of anti-rationalism, which is yet consciously intellectual in character, which co-exists with the tightly-knit logical method of Descartes and which is intrinsically different from the emotionalism of Rousseau and the romantics. This quality is found in its highest development only in the most fearless and sincere of artists, and is the fruit not of irrationalism but of a deliberate struggle to base thought and feeling on the whole personality and not on a selected aspect of it. It is largely for this that Nietzsche turns to the French—for the companionship of men like himself, who understand that living involves danger and

uncertainty, that life is not thinking or the acquisition of knowledge, that the core of the human problem is not to be apprehended purely intellectually.

It is as the quest for a personal aristocratic ideal, for 'Vornehmheit', that he envisages this search for men who would dare to embark on the sea of mystery which complete honesty involves. Repeatedly he asserts that there have been in modern history only a few periods when examples of this quality could arise, let alone did so. The Renaissance, he maintains, was such a period, the last great period of 'Vornehmheit', when a man could be himself fully and not be bound by the petty and degrading ideals of an all-pervading mediocrity. From that time onwards we have sunk ever deeper into the slime of the second-rate, until now no man dares to have values of his own. But there was a time, the French seventeenth century, when a society was for a space successful in carrying all the power and force which is characteristic of 'Vornehmheit', and Nietzsche is never tired of contrasting it with his own day:

Vergleich der griechischen Cultur und der französischen Cultur zur Zeit Ludwig's XIV. Entschiedener Glaube an sich selber. Ein Stand von Müssigen, die es sich schwer machen und viel Selbstüberwindung üben. Die Macht der Form, Wille, *sich* zu formen. 'Glück' als Ziel eingestanden. Viel Kraft und Energie *hinter* dem Formenwesen. Der Genuss am Anblick eines so *leicht scheinenden* Lebens. (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 94; XVIII, 72.)

The whole of Nietzsche's work is an attempt to create again the conditions for the emergence of such a period once more, and it is the French, he thinks, who have in modern times come nearest to it.

He lays the blame for the denial of all that this ideal implies predominantly at the door of Christianity. And it is here that the depth of his adherence to French civilization is plainest. For he finds that it represents not only all that was fine and non-Christian in European history, but also all that is most deeply-felt and formative in the Christian tradition:

Man kann es den Franzosen nicht streitig machen, dass sie das *christlichste* Volk der Erde gewesen sind: nicht in Hinsicht darauf, dass die Gläubigkeit der Masse bei ihnen grösser gewesen sei als anderwärts, sondern deshalb, weil bei ihnen die schwierigsten christlichen Ideale sich in Menschen verwandelt haben und nicht nur Vorstellung, Ansatz, Halbheit, geblieben sind . . . (*Morgenröthe*, sect. 192; X, 172 f.)

and he goes through the list of French Christians with admiration—Pascal, Fénelon, Mme de Guyon, Rancé, the Huguenots, ending with a discussion of the French free-thinkers, who are the more

noteworthy in that they have been tested more fully than those of other lands.

Nietzsche is searching always for *men*, not for ideals or ideas, and apart from the Greeks he finds them almost exclusively in France. Even the Christian tradition, which in his view has stifled the individual, finds its greatest exponents in France, and it is Pascal who represents for Nietzsche the enemy he must overcome, the enemy in whom so much of himself is mirrored that the struggle is as much within himself as between the two. French culture offers Nietzsche a testing-ground upon which he must do battle.

Napoleon was, he thought, another example of the attempt to recreate the personal aristocratic ideal of the Greeks and the Renaissance. For Nietzsche saw the eighteenth century as a denial of all that was fine in the seventeenth. The Revolution, brought about he considered largely by Rousseau, gave a fresh lease of life to Christianity, and thus completed the work of the eighteenth century in destroying the precarious balance and tension which was the achievement of the seventeenth. And he saw in Napoleon a heroic attempt to undo the harm done:

> *Der Kampf gegen das* 18. *Jahrhundert*: dessen Höchste Ueberwindung durch *Goethe* und *Napoleon*. Auch *Schopenhauer* kämpft gegen dasselbe; unfreiwillig aber tritt er zurück ins 17. Jahrhundert — er ist ein moderner Pascal. . . .
>
> *Napoleon*: die nothwendige Zusammengehörigkeit des höheren und des furchtbaren Menschen begriffen. Der 'Mann' wiederhergestellt . . . (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 1,017; XIX, 343).[1]

Tributes to Napoleon are scattered throughout the works; for Nietzsche he is an important symbol. He includes Napoleon in the list of those he must take account of in his projected continuation of the *Genealogie*.[2] Napoleon is continually quoted as an example of 'Vornehmheit', and Nietzsche regards him as the last of the great Renaissance men who had the courage to live as the ancients lived, though he did at times recognize that he was not entirely beneficial to the progress of Europe.[3]

[1] But Nietzsche sometimes considers the eighteenth century as a continuation of the 'vornehm' seventeenth, as, for instance, in another description of Napoleon (*Genealogie* I 16; XV, 313 f.).

[2] The list dates from 1887 and includes a number of Frenchmen—Rousseau, Galiani, Montaigne, Pascal, Sainte-Beuve, Renan, the Goncourts, Stendhal. Not all the figures mentioned earn Nietzsche's approval (*Nachlass* XIV, 304).

[3] His most judicious summing-up is this: 'Solche Menschen wie Napoleon müssen immer wieder kommen und den Glauben an die Selbstherrlichkeit des Einzelnen befestigen: er selber aber war durch die Mittel, die er anwenden *musste*, corrumpirt worden, und hatte die *noblesse* des Charakters *verloren*. Unter einer andern Art Menschen sich durchsetzend, hatte er andere Mittel anwenden können; und so wäre es nicht nothwendig, dass ein Cäsar schlecht werden müsste' (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 1,026; XIX, 350).

He sums up the history of the last three centuries in a note in the *Wille zur Macht*, characterizing the seventeenth as aristocratic, with the will sovereign, the eighteenth as feminine, with the senses ousting the will, and the nineteenth as animal, with appetite as determinative (sect. 95; XVIII, 72). But elsewhere he claims that the nineteenth century is not completely decadent since it is now less ashamed of its instincts than previous periods (sects. 120, 1,017; XVIII, 91; XIX, 343). For this Schopenhauer must have the main credit, but Nietzsche is conscious, too, that the French psychologists have played a large part in this development. He continually repeats that only in France are there any real psychologists.

And with the study of these, from the time of *Jenseits* (1886) onwards, begins his intensive reading of *modern* French literature. Here he is disappointed. He finds that this great culture has become contaminated by the prevailing temper. Only a sensitiveness of taste is left. In a note from the last period he says that only in France is there any real culture left in Europe. Stendhal, the last great event of the French spirit, and Mérimée, his follower—these have preserved the old 'vornehm' quality. And Taine to some extent too, in that he has opposed the influence of Renan and Sainte-Beuve. Nietzsche goes on to describe the saccharine religiosity of Renan and the undecided eclecticism of Sainte-Beuve, who is so concerned, he says, to analyse the 'petits faits' that he misses:

> . . . das viel unangenehmere grand fait, dass *alle* grossen französischen Menschenkenner auch noch ihren eignen Willen und Charakter im Leibe hatten, von Montaigne, Charron, La Rochefoucauld, bis auf Chamfort und Stendhal (*Nachlass* XVII, 350).

But to-day the will is weak in France (*Jenseits*, sect. 208; XV, 148. *Götzendämmerung*, *Streifzüge*, sect. 2; XVII, 108). The movement inaugurated by the Revolution has corrupted even the French. Nietzsche tries in one place to make out that the roots of this degradation are essentially un-French, blaming the plebian spirit of the English (*Jenseits*, sect. 253; XV, 212 f.). And he is never tired of pointing out the essential connection between decadence and the music of Wagner.

Nevertheless, France remains the intellectual and artistic centre of Europe. Nothing is more striking than the manner in which Nietzsche, despite all his scorn and contempt for the productions of the nineteenth century, still admires French culture and taste above all else in Europe. 'Als *Artist* hat man keine Heimat in Europa ausser in Paris' (*Ecce Homo*, *Warum ich so klug bin*, sect. 5; XXI, 202).

Whatever they do, however much they are corrupted, they are so firmly rooted in Nietzsche's heart and mind that he cannot do without them and cannot envisage any great movement without them at the head of it. In *Ecce Homo* he says:

> Im Grunde ist es eine kleine Anzahl älterer Franzosen, zu denen ich immer wieder zurückkehre: ich glaube nur an französische Bildung. . . . Dass ich Pascal nicht lese, sondern *liebe* . . . dass ich Etwas von Montaigne's Muthwillen im Geiste, wer weiss? vielleicht auch im Leibe habe; dass mein Artisten-Geschmack die Namen Molière, Corneille und Racine nicht ohne Ingrimm gegen ein wüstes Genie wie Shakespeare in Schutz nimmt: das schliesst zuletzt nicht aus, dass mir nicht auch die allerletzten Franzosen eine charmante Gesellschaft wären (*Warum ich so klug bin* sect. 3; XXI, 198 f.),

and here he mentions Bourget, Loti, Gyp, Meilhac, Anatole France, Lemaître, Guy de Maupassant, and finally Stendhal and Mérimée.

It is evident that Nietzsche was very deeply acquainted with French literature and saw in it the most perfect expression of the vicissitudes, the joys and triumphs as well as the degenerations of the whole European tradition. In a sense he pinned his hopes to it, and was forced to admit that it, too, was moving in the same direction as the rest of Europe, but his love was too deep to be affected by disillusionment. France was the home of 'Vornehmheit', but also of the most logical, the only logical, Christian, as Nietzsche several times called Pascal. The French have combined a very strong aristocratic emphasis on personal individual values with the most Catholic and Christian tradition in Europe. It is this paradoxical contradiction in the French spirit, which is wide and rich enough to carry both components, which may explain the extraordinary fascination it had for Nietzsche. Other ideals, other men held him for a time (Schopenhauer, Wagner, Socrates), but French culture shares with Greek the distinction of being a determining influence on him throughout his life.

3

We can estimate that influence in broad outline by considering some of the main exponents of it. Nietzsche's most consistent admiration was given to Montaigne, whom he read continually. Montaigne played a large part in emancipating his thought from the early subservience to Schopenhauer and Wagner. The crisis of 1876 was the first profound turning-point in Nietzsche's intellectual development, and the intelligent, aware, and yet unworried scepticism of the *Essais*, coupled with Montaigne's insistence on the joy and

value of living, the direct opposite of Schopenhauer's pessimism and the pretentious claims of Wagner, doubtless played a part in the transformation. And this specific effect is extended into a more profound movement of Nietzsche's mind—a turning from speculations about the universe to the study of concrete human actions and motives, from the metaphysical to the ethical. Nietzsche sees self-knowledge from now on as the key to all other knowledge, and the fact that his thought is finally concerned much more with morals and the effects of belief on action, than with truth and falsehood, is a reflection largely of his cultivation of the French moralists, and especially Montaigne.

With Pascal the case is different. At the beginning Nietzsche regards him simply as the most profound of the moralists, but from the time of *Morgenröthe* (1881) he begins to occupy himself with the challenge which Pascal presents, and his work is marked by the agonized desire to enlist Pascal on his side, to accept his analysis of reality while circumventing his conclusions. This attempt was never successful, and Nietzsche's frenzied insistence at the end that Christianity destroyed Pascal marks the recognition of his own failure. Drawn to the Frenchman first by admiration of his uncompromising logic, he delighted in Pascal's destruction of the claims of reason by the very reason itself. The antithetical thinking, the union of contraries, the 'renversement continuel du pour au contre' always attracted him. And Pascal is the great challenge. Nietzsche feels that if he can conquer Pascal he has conquered Christianity. But beyond all this is the fact that the two men are more alike than they are different—they both think with the whole personality, not with the intellect only, they both see so clearly the fundamental paradox of man, caught between two infinities, angel and beast in one. Pascal's influence on Nietzsche has a double character—he reinforces the action of Montaigne and the other moralists, but he also gradually reveals to Nietzsche a side of himself which might otherwise never have become conscious, that side of himself which links them both. Pascal did not make Nietzsche religious, but he undoubtedly revealed to him his own fundamentally religious nature.

There is a similar development in Nietzsche's reading of La Rochefoucauld. At first he is simply a psychological iconoclast, giving Nietzsche ammunition in the assault on ideals and the inquiry into the bases of morality which marks especially the 'positivistic' period of his work. But from *Zarathustra* (1884) onwards, Nietzsche reads La Rochefoucauld with a deeper appreciation of the positive

side of his teaching and the ideal of 'Vornehmheit' owes something to this. In every direction he apparently goes beyond the Frenchman—in his analysis of human illusion, of the mutual dependence of good and evil, of the deception of our egoism, of the duty to be true to ourselves—but always, even in the conception of the Superman, he is building on foundations laid by the latter.

Rousseau, like Pascal, is a thinker whom Nietzsche continually attacks. Yet in both cases the violent scorn and hatred masks a real affinity. On certain points Nietzsche consistently misinterprets the Frenchman, as when he makes him responsible for the Revolution and the ensuing horrors. But he never failed to realize the magnitude of the man. Rousseau is a culmination in many ways of the tendency manifested in Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Chamfort—the distrust of reason and logical analysis. This answers perfectly to Nietzsche's own cast of mind. Further, Rousseau and he attack essentially the same problem. Both see modern man as corrupted, his history one of decadence, and both seek to discover the cause of this and prescribe a cure. And their solutions are strictly comparable. Rousseau's 'follow nature' and Nietzsche's emphasis on the personality 'becoming itself', following its own instinct beyond good and evil—both these exhortations appeal to the individual consciousness at a level below that of rational thought, and both have in mind the same final consummation.

The last of the line is Stendhal, whom Nietzsche studied only late in life. It was not until 1881 that he began reading him with deep appreciation, but the impact was immediate and lasting. Stendhal's emphasis on the 'power-aspects' of life, his cult of energy in living, his reverence for the great, even if criminal, individual, contributed important elements to Nietzsche's final attitude. And on a less fundamental plane, he radically modified Nietzsche's conception of art.

These figures are the most important of the French authors with whom he came into contact, and the ones whose influence on him was most marked. But practically no Frenchman whom he read failed to make a lasting impression on him. In this study we shall see that the cumulative effect of his deep study of French literature of the last three centuries was one of the major determinants in the formation of his final attitude, and was intimately connected with all the various stages in the development of his very complex personality.

I

FROM AESTHETIC PESSIMISM TO SCEPTICISM (1869–1876)

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY MYSTIC

I

THE young man who travelled to Basle in April 1869 to take up his appointment as Professor of Classical Philology was the product of a very comprehensive education at an illustrious school and university. Yet this apparently highly-trained and scientific scholar was at heart filled with a burning desire to come to grips with the spirit of the Greeks he venerated by intuitive aesthetic surrender rather than by the methods of patient scholarship. He was quite dominated by his passionate adoration of Schopenhauer and Wagner. It is true that already he had had some misgivings about the conclusions of the former,[1] but Schopenhauer nevertheless incorporated for him the ideal of the philosopher, as Wagner did that of the artist. Both owed this position to the manner in which, for Nietzsche, they embodied the values he adored so much in Greek civilization. For his constant preoccupation was Greek thought and art, particularly those of the centuries before Socrates. And although concentration on textual problems had previously held them in check, the tendencies to extravagance and almost religious fervour which appear in the *Geburt der Tragödie* were already deeply rooted in his whole sensibility. And his devotion to Schopenhauer could not fail to make him critical of the whole discipline of 'Philologie'. Letters from the time just before his appointment prove how little he was disposed to fit into the purely academic world of research without rebelling strongly in the direction of a 'living' philosophy in the style of Schopenhauer.[2] We may say that he entered his professional career with some misgiving, feeling that the genius was the only human being justified in his own right, whether he be saint, artist or philosopher, and the academic world was nothing unless it contributed directly to the production or cultivation of genius.

This is plain in his inaugural lecture, ostensibly on Homer, but in fact concerned with the activity of philology and making the points

[1] He had written a 'critical' account of him in 1867, based mainly on Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*. But his letter to Deussen of 20 October, 1868 (*Ges. Br.* I, 130) shows how little this affected his admiration.

[2] Cf. for instance the same letter to Deussen, in which he calls philology '... Missgeburt der Göttin Philosophie, erzeugt mit einem Idioten oder Cretin'.

we have noted, ending with a justification of the science which impressed his hearers, among them Burckhardt, with the fact that he was an artist as well as a scholar. The atmosphere here at Basle must have been deliciously free and cosmopolitan after the somewhat circumscribed world of Leipzig. Here were scholars from many different lands, in a town which could well be called the meeting-point of intellectual currents from all over Europe, in a situation which lifted their world above the sectarian interests of universities elsewhere, with their predominantly nationalist outlook.[1] There were men here whose reputation was European, whose allegiance was to no country, but to the ideals of human culture and European life as a whole which were Nietzsche's own. Burckhardt himself—now fifty-one years old and world-famous—was soon a close friend, despite the twenty-six years between them. The theologian Franz Overbeck, who had a French mother and had spoken only French until he was twelve, became Nietzsche's closest friend in Basle.[2] But the great experience of these first years of academic activity was Nietzsche's close intercourse with Wagner and his family, now living at Tribschen. Nietzsche had met Wagner before, in Leipzig, but now he was able to see him frequently, and he spent the greater part of his free time at the house by the lake, listening to the Master, conversing with him and Cosima about the Greeks, about music, about the great task of cultivating the genius. Both Christmas 1869 and 1870 were spent at Tribschen, and Nietzsche took charge of the proof-correcting of Wagner's autobiography, which was about to appear. His attitude was one of complete devotion, the musician came into his life just when his Christian faith was leaving him, to be replaced by the ideal of heroic tragic culture he saw so clearly realized in ancient Greek art, so that he regarded the composer of the *Meistersinger* as a Messiah, who was to herald the rebirth of a genuine human culture after the centuries of Christian and rationalistic thinking had all but destroyed the old natural harmony between man and nature.

The war of 1870 was only a temporary interruption of this happy union of enthusiastic and reverent study at the university and delightful and inspiring holidays at Tribschen. At first Nietzsche was filled with burning patriotism and dismay that the new culture he saw

[1] For some detailed description of the intellectual life at Basle at this time see Bernoulli: *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, vol. I, and Andler II, 115 ff.

[2] The two shared a house and took at least one meal a day together. Overbeck remained a close friend of Nietzsche's all his life, took charge of his books after his retirement from the university in 1879, and brought him back from Turin after his final stroke in 1888. Bernoulli, in opposition to the Weimar biographers, headed by Nietzsche's sister, maintains that Overbeck was in fact the best friend Nietzsche ever had (*Overbeck und Nietzsche* I, 59 ff.).

arising in Germany should be menaced by the enmity of France, which seemed to him to incorporate all the 'philosophic' and 'theo-retical' values he so much despised.[1] But his war experiences disillusioned him completely—he was convinced, on his return, broken in health, that, so far from being a great new civilizing power in the world, Germany, or rather Prussia, was the greatest threat to true culture.[2] And this threw him even more forcibly back on to the Greeks.

For Christmas 1870 he gave Cosima his essay *Über die dionysische Weltanschauung*, and two other essays of his, *Griechische Musikdrama* and *Sokrates und die Tragödie*, were printed during 1870 for private circulation. These three productions are the first signs of the radically new conception of Greek culture which found full expression in the *Geburt der Tragödie* (1871), and which made him at once famous and suspect by his colleagues. Here everything is pointed towards the glorification of the Master which forms the conclusion. It cannot be denied that Nietzsche had to do some violence to his thought to bring it into harmony with his adoration of Wagner. Wagner's idea of the Greeks and his own were radically dissimilar—Wagner had no conception of the importance Nietzsche assigned to the Dionysian element in Greek culture—so that there is a fundamental contradiction, apparent in the book, between Nietzsche's interpretation of the Greeks and his worship of Wagner. This was to become more and more apparent later on. In this book the two things are brought into an uneasy partnership, which cannot be maintained.

The fundamental conception upon which all is based is announced in the first paragraph. The two principles which Nietzsche sees at the root of all Greek art and religion, the Apolline and the Dionysian, are characterized as dream and intoxication. At the centre of all dream, of all harmony and grace, the Greeks, he urges, felt the terrifying but fundamental principle of Dionysos—the primal unity of man with nature, which is broken by individuation and can only be restored in the abandon of the greatest art. The ease and simplicity of the Greeks, he maintains, are in reality a sustained and heroic effort to transform the consciousness of the chaotic horror of life into an illusion of peace and harmony. For life at bottom is will—the blind irrational and aimless Schopenhauerian will, ugly, terrifying and dangerous. The Greeks created two principles to enable them to bear

[1] Cf. his letter to his mother, 16 July, 1870 (*Ges. Br.* V, 187).

[2] Cf. letters to Gersdorff, 7 November, 1870 (*Ges. Br.* I, 173), and to Rohde, 24 November, 1870 (*Ges. Br.* II, 207).

this exalting but terrible knowledge. The Olympian gods, who were a justification for human life in that they lived it themselves, were one, and art the other. By viewing life through the eyes of Apollo—by uniting the consciousness of Dionysos, of the gaping chaos, with the formal illusion of Apollo—our human experience could be borne, for only as an *aesthetic* phenomenon, says Nietzsche, is life eternally justified (III, 46). The influence of Schopenhauer is apparent on every page; Nietzsche's analysis of the metaphysical significance of music is deeply coloured, for instance, by the latter's famous and profound thought on the subject. And Nietzsche goes on to describe the genesis of Greek tragedy in the tragic chorus, reaching his definition of the earliest tragedy as the union of this Dionysian chorus with the Apolline world of images (III, 63). And he links Greek tragedy throughout its history with this mystery—the fundamental recognition of the unity of all being, with individuation as the source of all evil, and art as the hope of restoring the broken unity (III, 75). Tragedy, he maintains, was killed by the appearance of Euripides, who, with Socrates his master, represented the triumph of the new 'theoretical' man, whose effort was directed continually towards knowledge, over the old 'tragic' and 'aesthetic' man, whose sole preoccupation was with beauty. Socrates is the extreme opposite pole to the mystic, he is the 'theoretical' man, whose appearance seemed to advance human culture, but in fact killed Greek tragedy, and whose essential insufficiency has only now, near the end of the nineteenth century, become apparent. Thus neatly does Nietzsche link his interpretation of Greek history and art to the needs of the present day, and especially to the cultural triumph and cultural possibilities he sees incorporated in Wagner. The modern world is in a period of mainly 'theoretical' culture and Wagner is the pointer which can show us the way to advance beyond this. This cannot be a matter for the individual alone, it must rejuvenate the whole people, so that Wagner embodies also the ancient ideal of public art, art as communal activity, not as individual pleasure or cultivation. The last section of the book, which Nietzsche later thought spoilt the whole conception, makes clear the immense extent to which he was prepared to go to fit in his own conception of the Greeks with his desire to strike as resounding a blow as possible for his hero.

2

If we attempt to trace the roots of this youthful attitude of Nietzsche's, we should have to deal mainly with his reception of

Wagner and Schopenhauer. We might consider also his delight in Goethe and his schoolboy enthusiasm for Hölderlin. We should remember that on active service his consolation was Byron. But we should find no French sources for his conceptions. Indeed, before his arrival at Basle his French reading was only limited. A consideration of the productions of his school and student days, and the detailed account of his intellectual development given by his sister,[1] reveals singularly little which would argue an early interest in French culture. We know that he enjoyed as a boy listening to his grandmother's stories of Napoleon,[2] and this may have sown a seed later to bear fruit. He studied French at school, but did not reach a very high standard.[3] And at the university his mind was filled by the Greeks and Wagner and Schopenhauer. In 1868 he planned to visit Paris with Rohde, to spend perhaps a year there, preparing for their future careers.[4] Nothing came of this plan, and, indeed, Nietzsche never visited the country he loved and admired so much (if one excepts his war service). Nor is it permissible to draw from this episode the conclusion that already he was deeply interested in that country, since the evidence goes to show that his knowledge of it was slight and no more extensive than that of any well-educated young man in Germany at this time.

If we attempt to determine how much French reading he had done at the time of the call to Basle, we find only meagre indications. There are mentions of Thiers, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Voltaire, Comte, Vauvenargues and Laplace, and some letters betray a certain interest in France.[5] And one of his letters describes his life at Leipzig at the house of Professor Biedermann, and mentions that there is a French guest, M. Flaxland, there, from whom he hopes to learn some French.[6] The indications are that when he accepted the call to Basle

[1] E. Förster-Nietzsche: *Nietzsches Leben* (2 vols., 1895), later revised as *Der junge Nietzsche*, 1912, and *Der einsame Nietzsche*, 1914.

[2] Förster-Nietzsche, I, 65.

[3] Förster-Nietzsche, I, 191 f.

[4] Cf. *Ges. Br.* II, 15–127, where the plan is discussed. The letters are from February 1868 to January 1869.

[5] In a school-essay (I, 54, 56), in *Die Teleologie seit Kant*, 1868 (I, 406), and in the sketches on Democritus, 1867 (II, 135 ff.). Also letters to Pinder and Gersdorff, July, 1866 (*Ges. Br.* I. 29 ff.).

[6] *Ges. Br.* II, 76 (to Rohde, 20 October, 1868). This seems to suggest that Nietzsche felt his French to be weak. Bernoulli (I, 153 ff.) maintains that he was always weak at French, but this probably means that he never attained the fluency and correctness of Overbeck, who had spoken no other language in his youth. The great number of French books later found in Nietzsche's library makes it clear that he later made himself quite competent to read the language fluently. Details of books in Nietzsche's library are given in Berthold: *Bücher und Wege zu Büchern*, 1900. This list includes books in Nietzsche's possession which Overbeck took charge of in 1879, and also books subsequently acquired, until the library finally came into his sister's hands in 1889.

his knowledge of French literature was of the scantiest, that he had no more than a second-hand acquaintanceship with the authors he mentions. He had, of course, read Schopenhauer with his numerous quotations of French authors, and he had studied Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*, which describes the thought of Gassendi, Descartes, Bayle, Voltaire, Diderot, La Mettrie, Holbach and Comte, as well as Montaigne, Charron, Pascal, Helvétius and others.[1] But there is no evidence that his knowledge of French culture was as yet any more than superficial.

It was in Basle that he began seriously to study the French. Cosima Wagner, with her French culture and deep love of French literature, very soon communicated her enthusiasm to the young professor. And Overbeck's fiancée, later his wife, Ida Rothpletz, used to hold 'French evenings' where her friends gathered to read and discuss French writers. The two women were willing helpers and guides. These evenings of the Overbecks and Cosima's discussions about the French were scarcely less important in Nietzsche's education than the association with Wagner himself.[2] Sainte-Beuve was read, on various writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,[3] and this whetted Nietzsche's appetite for a deeper acquaintanceship with the great masters. He began to read all the seventeenth-century literature he could find, and to go back to the sixteenth century also. Ida Overbeck later gave an account of one of these soirées, in which La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Fontenelle and Chamfort were read, and Nietzsche spoke at length on them, betraying already a deep love for the period of Louis XIV and a hatred of the Revolution.[4] For Christmas 1870, Cosima gave him a beautiful edition of Montaigne and Lisbeth (his sister) one of La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues and La Bruyère.[5] From now till the time of *Menschliches* (1876) it is predominantly the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century moralists whom he reads.

[1] Bernoulli mentions (I, 143) that in Basle Lange was still Nietzsche's textbook for the French.

[2] Cf. Bernoulli, I, 234–44, and Andler, I, 155 ff. for fuller accounts of these evenings.

[3] Ida Rothpletz later translated the *Causeries* which they read, and published them as *Menschen des XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*. They deal with Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Mme de Graffigny, Voltaire, Mme de Châtelet, Mme de Latour-Franqueville, Rousseau, Diderot, Vauvenargues, Mlle de Lespinasse and Beaumarchais. Nietzsche recommends this book to Peter Gast and to his family in August 1880 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 37, and V, 435).

[4] These *Erinnerungen* of Ida Overbeck, quoted by Bernoulli (I, 237), refer to the early seventies. It is noteworthy that she refers to the French moralists as 'seine Franzosen', despite the fact that she was the teacher and Nietzsche the pupil. What he lacked in linguistic facility he plainly made up for in enthusiasm.

[5] Cf. Förster-Nietzsche, II, 20, and Nietzsche's letter to his family of 30 December, 1870 (*Ges. Br.* V, 201).

But in this first flush of Dionysian enthusiasm there is no sign that his French reading, limited as it still was, had affected him. There are unimportant references to Pascal in the *Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (IV, 160 f.) and to Descartes (III, 88).[1] In his lectures on Sophocles he discusses French classical drama and instances Corneille (II, 248), and in some of the sketches written during the composition of the *Geburt der Tragödie* he deals fully with French tragedy, comparing it unfavourably with that of the Greeks (III, 170, 179, 181, 197, 200). He also compares Schiller with the French masters (III, 374). But he shows no understanding of Corneille or Racine, and this discussion of the French theatre was not included in the *Geburt der Tragödie*, for which it was destined, probably because Nietzsche did not wish to diminish the salient position he assigned to Wagner by introducing another modern rebirth of tragedy, but also, perhaps, because he felt his knowledge of the French dramatists insufficient to justify a treatment of them in his published work. Of eighteenth-century writers, both Voltaire and Rousseau are, of course, well known to him. Voltaire is mentioned in his lectures (V, 303), and in a discussion of French classical tragedy Nietzsche refers to a letter of his to Quirini (III, 169), which shows at least that he has pushed his reading as far as including some of the correspondence.

3

Only Rousseau of all these[2] can be said to have already left his mark. And here it is not a question of influence in the sense that the reading of Rousseau has altered the direction of Nietzsche's thought. Throughout his work Nietzsche was never tired of pouring scorn and hatred upon the Frenchman. But, as so often, this bitter attack cloaks a real similarity of temperament, and we can see in his earliest published work something in the cast of his mind profoundly akin to Rousseau's. The references to the latter are of no great significance.[3] It is rather in the whole movement of Nietzsche's thought that we should see a compulsion which led him to the study of

[1] We may assume that Nietzsche was well grounded in Descartes at school and university, but his reception of him was never warm. His cast of mind is totally antipathetic to that of the Frenchman, and his treatment of him throughout his life rarely shows signs of interest or admiration.

[2] There are references to Maupertuis (V, 468) and Laplace (IV, 272). His sister gave him Stendhal's *Promenades dans Rome* as a present in 1871, but there is no evidence yet of any interest in this writer.

[3] One (III, 34) is a direct reference to *Émile*.

Rousseau. When he attacks modern civilization later, in the *Unzeitgemässen*, he does so in the name of the individual human personality, which at this time he sees manifested in the highest degree in the genius. We have seen that this was his attitude in the *Geburt der Tragödie* also. And Rousseau's attack on modern civilization starts from a similar standpoint. Both envisage a 'natural' man who has become overlaid under successive layers of 'civilization'. And in the *Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche seems at times to be attacking not 'modern' civilization only, but *all* civilization, in a way very reminiscent of Rousseau's arguments in the *Discours* of 1750 and 1754. In his description of the Dionysian knowledge of primitive man, of the consciousness of unity and submergence of the individuality in the eternal whole which precedes individuation, Nietzsche uses terms which to some extent recall Rousseau's sketch of the 'natural' man at peace with the ultimate mysterious powers of the world (cf. sect. 8, III, 58 ff.), and his whole account of the happy, harmonious relation of Greek man to the ultimate powers, which was expressed in the Dionysian revels and in Apolline art, and most completely in the union of the two principles in the tragedy, and which was destroyed by Socrates and Euripides, by the advent of what he calls 'theoretical' man—all this betrays a view in many respects similar to Rousseau's. When the latter, for instance, says:

> . . . j'ose presque assurer que l'état de réflexion est un état contre la nature, et que l'homme qui médite est un animal dépravé (*Discours de l'Inégalité*, *Œuvres* I, 87)[1]

he is making essentially the same point that Nietzsche makes against Socrates (*Geburt der Tragödie*, sects. 15 ff.). And Nietzsche's whole criticism of the culture of Socrates and Euripides rests on the cardinal principle that the ultimate mysteries are and should remain unknown and unfathomable to man, that they were expressed by the myths which underlay Greek culture of the highest period, and that the attempt of the intellect to apprehend them, as exemplified by Socrates, led only to the severing of the tie which bound man to the core of reality, so that he became a homeless wanderer, knowing more and more, but unable to recapture his original intuitive awareness of the essential human situation. Rousseau's attack on the principles of civilization runs on similar lines, though it must be remembered that both he and Nietzsche are speaking of a 'natural' quality in man which is not historically situated but is an intrinsic aspect of his eternal nature and situation. Although Rousseau

[1] Rousseau is quoted from the 1905–09 edition in 13 vols.

sometimes speaks as though the 'natural' man were simply to be understood as primitive man, he has in mind usually a conception of 'natural' man as the inner core of all men at all times. Indeed, he insists at times that 'natural' man, as he pictures him, is a logical construction rather than a portrait of any particular type of man who has existed in history. He wants, he says:

> . . . de bien connaître un état qui n'existe plus, qui n'a peut-être point existé, qui probablement n'existera jamais, et dont il est pourtant nécessaire d'avoir des notions ustes, pour bien juger de notre état présent (*Discours de l'Inégalité*, *Œuvres* I, 79).

And Nietzsche's analysis of the supersession of 'tragic' by 'theoretical' man at the coming of Socrates has a historical application to Athenian culture, but has also a relevance to the situation of all men throughout the centuries. Nietzsche, indeed, calls for a 'rebirth of tragedy' in the same way as Rousseau called for a 'return to nature', and though these are not the same thing, they are both declarations of opposition to what Nietzsche calls 'theoretical' man, both thought of as permanent human possibilities, with more than a purely historical application. We have seen that almost every page of the *Geburt der Tragödie* shows Nietzsche's dependence on Schopenhauer, at least on the general lines of his metaphysic of will and his attitude to the essential problem of life. And it is most significant that later on in his work Nietzsche is fond of drawing a parallel between Rousseau and Schopenhauer[1]—this is an indication rather of the affinity between himself and Rousseau than of that between Schopenhauer and the Frenchman.

It hardly needs pointing out that their common opposition to 'theoretical' man springs from an instinctive distrust of rationalism in both of them. Nietzsche stands from the start in the fundamentally anti-rationalist tradition of thinkers, and in this he is akin to Rousseau. Both of them reject Cartesianism and the postulations on which it is based. Rousseau's appeal to *sentiment* enrages Nietzsche later on and leads him to dismiss the Frenchman as a sentimental emotionalist, but it is, indeed, only one thread in the complex pattern of anti-rationalist thinking which attracted Nietzsche so much to the French. The first exponent of this tendency whom he read at all deeply is Rousseau, a thinker who sees that human reason is not the key to the understanding of reality, but at best can exercise only a critical and analytical function. So that he reads Rousseau with avidity—the two men

[1] Cf. for instance the section entitled 'Die Grossmütigkeit des Denkers' (*Morgenröthe*, sect. 459; X, 295).

are at one in the general cast of their minds.[1] And when Nietzsche later conducts an examination into the real springs of human conduct and exalts the 'instinct' and the 'will' above rational calculation, he is only seeing, in a new profundity and cogency, what Rousseau implied by the use of the term *sentiment* to describe the thrust of the mind towards its object at a level below that of conscious rationalized thought.

4

We may then say that the early 'aesthetic pessimism' shown in the works up to and including the *Geburt der Tragödie* owes little directly to Nietzsche's reading of French writers. It is compounded of his own native romantic sensibility and the determinative influence of Schopenhauer and Wagner. But already we can see a notable similarity of approach and of the direction of his thought to that of Rousseau. This will become more apparent later on, when Nietzsche turns bitterly against the Frenchman and yet builds his whole conception of the human situation and the human task essentially on Rousseau's foundations.

The attitude expressed in the *Geburt der Tragödie* runs on unchanged in Nietzsche's thought until the radical break represented by the writing of *Menschliches* in 1876. But side by side with this mystical adoration of the pre-Socratic Greeks and the emphasis on the Dionysian ecstasy as the root of all valuable human experience is growing up in Nietzsche during these years at Basle a more realistic line of thought, which leads him on the one hand to a very conscientious and painstaking investigation of the problems involved in education, and on the other, and this is a radical transformation, to a final abandonment of this early 'metaphysical' approach to human life in favour of a much more restrained and much less pretentious concentration on ethical qualities and on human conduct generally. The sign of the completion of this transformation is the break with Wagner. In this development it is predominantly the French moralists who influence him.

[1] Even in their childhood there is perhaps more than a fortuitous similarity. There is something fundamentally alike in young Rousseau reading books to his father till late in the night and feeding his precocious taste for theology with delighted attendance at the sonorous sermons of Geneva, and the schoolboy Nietzsche—'der kleine Pastor', as he was called—refusing to run home in the rain in obedience to the rule that the children should walk with becoming modesty and sedateness. Each shows a little of the prig and a great deal of the fanatic in embryo. And each held his hand over a flame in emulation of the Roman fortitude of Musius Scaevola (*Confessions*, *Œuvres* VIII, 4; Förster-Nietzsche, I, 105).

CHAPTER 2

FROM MYSTICISM TO ANALYSIS

I

THE *Geburt der Tragödie* aroused a storm of controversy. Only a small circle of friends received the book with enthusiasm. It may be that this total lack of response to his heartfelt attempt to say something of value both to the academic world and to his country at large played its part in determining Nietzsche henceforth to be more aggressive than ever in his works. Meanwhile Wagner's star was in the ascendant. The Bayreuth project was well started, Wagner and Cosima moved there, and Nietzsche was one of the many who flocked there in May 1872 to see the foundation-stone for the theatre laid. It was here that he met Malwida von Meysenbug, a devoted Wagnerian who had read the *Geburt der Tragödie* with deep sympathy. Nietzsche was happy. It seemed as though the exalted aspirations he had described in his book were to be realized. He was now working on his *Philosophenbuch*, a comprehensive work on the pre-Socratic philosophers whom he loved. This was never finished, but various sketches for it were published posthumously, in particular the essay *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*, and another essay, *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (1873), concerned with the nature of truth, and reiterating the conviction that error is necessary for life and that the nature of language is such that our very thinking involves error.

Apart from the preoccupation with the early Greeks and the reverent championship of Wagner, both of which are mingled in the *Geburt der Tragödie*, a third subject increasingly claims Nietzsche's attention—the question of education. The lectures *Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* (1871) take up this theme. All but the last were actually delivered, and were well received. This may seem surprising in view of the fact that they contain a forthright attack on the university system of Germany and on the type of professors who taught in it. This is couched in the form of a story, founded on Nietzsche's own experiences as a student, of a meeting of two students with a sage, a thinly-disguised portrait of Schopenhauer, who expounds the errors on which present-day education is based and points to a better goal which it could attain. There are two plans for

the last, undelivered, lecture. In the first, Schopenhauer and Wagner were to be surrounded by a crowd of students and a solemn ceremony was to inaugurate the new era of culture and unity. This was amended later, after Nietzsche's disillusionment over the reception of his first book, and it was made clear in the second version that there could be no compromise between the high aspirations of the sage and the general culture of the time, with its triviality, its materialism, its philistine and pedantic living on the spiritual capital of the past. Throughout these lectures the cardinal emphasis is against the whole conception of 'Massenbildung'; the aim must be not to make all cultured, but to educate selected individuals for their personal task (IV, 61). It is the error that culture can be imparted to all which has led culture itself to decay and produced the bastard culture of knowledge without vision and technique without direction.

Nietzsche was happy in his work at this time. But during the next year it became apparent that the Bayreuth project was not rousing the enthusiasm which had been hoped for. The subscription-lists remained unfilled and financial difficulties mounted. It seemed that the project nearest Nietzsche's heart was doomed to failure, and his despair grew daily. It seemed to him that what prevented the rebirth of culture for which he and Wagner were both so ardently working was the dead hand of the philistine materialism which governed German life, and he resolved to direct a violent attack on a well-known and much-admired representative of this hostile force—the thinker, D. F. Strauss, whose new book *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (1872) seemed to him to lay bare all the self-satisfaction, the puerile pedantry and sterility of the 'Kulturphilister'—the philistine who dresses himself up in a veneer of culture to impose on his hearers.

This essay, *David Strauss, der Bekenner und Schriftsteller*, the first of the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, appeared in 1873, and was bitterly resented, for Strauss was only a peg upon which Nietzsche hung a violent attack on the whole 'culture' of his time. The German victory of 1871, the very crown and centre of the faith of the German people in its cultural health and power, is from the start regarded as a disaster, the destruction of the German spirit by the German Empire (VI, 132). Culture, says Nietzsche, is essentially a unity of artistic style in the life of the people (VI, 135), and it is a gross error to think that the accumulation of knowledge in any way contributes to it. Barbarism is stylelessness or a medley of all styles, and this is what exists in Germany to-day. This Nietzsche blames on the 'Kulturphilister', who gives up the eternal struggle to recreate the values of

the classical civilization he admires, and is content to regard them as a sort of cushion to assure his own comfort. His hack-work, which he calls research, gives him a strong sense of self-satisfaction and makes him instinctively hostile to any questioning of its value. Nietzsche examines Strauss as a representative of this type—disposing of his half-baked religion, of his comfortable belief that he has inherited the mantle of Lessing and is the 'German Voltaire', of his 'culture', which consists in preening himself on his knowledge of the classics, without making any attempt to relate them to his own life. The whole attack is based on the explicit hostility which Nietzsche feels between the genius on the one hand and the scholar on the other. And this from a professor of philology! No wonder his colleagues throughout Germany were astonished and disgusted by his 'betrayal' of his own and their own way of life.

The second *Unzeitgemässe* carries on the same fight. *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (1874) attacks the prevailing conception of history, of which contemporary Germany was so proud, and which was felt to be the crowning glory of German culture. The preoccupation with history can, says Nietzsche, destroy the living force of men (VI, 232). In so far as our historical spirit is simply a preying on the past, a mechanical application of past struggle to our own life, or, worse still, a 'disinterested' or 'objective' love of knowledge of past events, it is not only valueless but actually harmful to any real culture. Only in so far as history serves life is it of value. And life is an essentially unhistorical power, so that history can never be 'pure science', like mathematics (VI, 240). Unless our historical study is genuine recreation of the values we admire and study, it is weakening and destructive. The Germans have been destroyed by history (VI, 264). Modern man suffers from a weakened personality (VI, 266), and this Nietzsche attributes very largely to the widespread homage paid to the historical mentality, as though our knowing all about the glories of the past made them in any sense our own. Real history—the continual recreation of past glory—can only be borne by the strong, it destroys the weak (VI, 270), and this latter is what is happening in Germany. One may only interpret the past out of the highest power of the present (VI, 282). Anything else is dead pedantry. The charges Nietzsche had brought in his first essay are now widened out and applied to a whole attitude of mind, and that the dominant attitude of the nineteenth century.

Though these two essays are virulent and destructive, the positive side of Nietzsche's thought is quite clear and hangs consistently

together with the ideas of the *Geburt der Tragödie*. Knowledge is never an end in itself, but is only justified as it contributes to 'life', more life, more abundant life. Similarly humanity is not an end in itself, but is only justified by the sporadic occurrence of genius. And scholarship is of value only in so far as it is carried out in a spirit which keeps these ideals constantly in mind. Only then can genuine culture, that 'unity of style' which is the breeding-ground of genius, be attained. Anything else is sham, pretentious and life-destroying. All this follows directly from the fundamental conceptions of the *Geburt der Tragödie*. But there has been a certain shift of emphasis. No longer is Nietzsche concerned so much with the ultimate situation of man in the universe, with the essence of the human attitude in face of the world's agony, but now rather with the actual problems of human living in society. Nothing is in essence changed, yet the new preoccupation with these contemporary problems, with ethical attitudes rather than metaphysical speculations, gives these essays a new urgency and a new orientation. Before, his head was in the clouds, he was concerned with ancient culture and with man's destiny; even in the discussion of Wagner this is so. Now he is facing the problems of his own life and that of those around him. His concern is the present, not the past or the eternal.

2

It is plain that in large part this change in direction is the result of his own teaching activity. And the atmosphere of Basle itself, in contrast to that of Leipzig, was likely to focus Nietzsche's attention on the problems of living rather than those of knowledge, on the activity of man in the world rather than his metaphysical situation. His reading at this time reinforced this tendency. Once he was disillusioned with German culture, it is natural that he should seek to penetrate the secret of the French culture which was so signally defeated in the field and yet so plainly retained its pre-eminent position. We have seen, too, that the circle in which he moved in Basle encouraged his French reading.

There are indications in the work of this time of the effect his reading of the French moralists is having on him. Consider first his reading of Montaigne. It is perhaps strange that he should be from the beginning so fond of him. The young professor, devoted to the ancients, burning with enthusiasm for the disillusioned pessimism of Schopenhauer, extravagant to the point of theatricality in all his

opinions, was hardly likely, on the face of it, to welcome the counsels of moderation, tolerance and prudence of the cheerful Epicurean who wrote in a language which must have presented some difficulty.[1] But the whole of Nietzsche's French reading is determined by his constant desire to find spirits kindred to himself, so that he does not, as one might have expected, begin by soaking himself in modern literature and then move progressively backwards towards the giants of the past, but rather goes straight for authors who seem to answer some quality in himself, to echo his own aspirations. We have seen that his preferences from the start are in line with his own nature. Yet the kinship between him and Montaigne is not apparently very strong, and his interest is even more surprising in that it appears not to have been shared by Ida Rothpletz.[2] The reason for this early predilection for one so different from himself is, perhaps, that he came to the French from the Ancients. Having discovered in them the finest flowering of human strength and sensibility, he is curious from the first to find out whether such a flowering has been possible since, and whether it has been achieved. Burckhardt convinced him that the Renaissance recreated something of the old quality, and he saw in Wagner the possibility of its renewal in present-day Germany. But there was another such period—the French seventeenth century. And coming from the Ancients, through the Renaissance, in his search for a man who would express the same ideals, what more natural than that he should be drawn to Montaigne, who presents in some sort a bridge between the rugged humanism of the Renaissance and the more refined and delicate sensibility of French classicism?

Cosima's present of Montaigne for Christmas 1870 seems to show that Nietzsche was interested in the *Essais* some time before, but it is unlikely that he read them before his arrival in Basle, and certainly his intense cultivation of them dates only from this time. There is nothing in the *Geburt der Tragödie* which would point to any marked influence of Montaigne, and we are justified in assuming that although Nietzsche has been reading the *Essais* for some time they have not yet set their mark on him.

At the time of the *Unzeitgemässen* the case is strikingly different. With the change of attitude already noted we find also clear signs of a profound reading of Montaigne. The latter's anti-dogmatic and

[1] That Nietzsche found the language of the *Essais* difficult, even as late as 1884, is shown by his letter to his mother asking her to send the German translation (20 September, 1884; *Ges. Br.* V, 565).

[2] Cf. Bernoulli, I, 236.

pre-eminently critical attitude is one factor in turning Nietzsche away from the somewhat limited and intolerant formulations of his earlier work. In the essay *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (1873) we find such passages as this:

> Was ist also Wahrheit? Ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen, kurz eine Summe von menschlichen Relationen, die, poetisch und rhetorisch gesteigert, übertragen, geschmückt wurden, und die nach langem Gebrauch einem Volke fest, kanonisch und verbindlich dünken; die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, dass sie welche sind, Metaphern, die abgenutzt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind, Münzen, die ihr Bild verloren haben und nun als Metall, nicht mehr als Münzen, in Betracht kommen (VI, 81).

This disillusioned attitude to the claim of the mind to know the truth, which is later to take an almost pragmatic form in Nietzsche, stands in sharp contrast to the enthusiasm of the *Geburt der Tragödie*, and is curiously similar to the final unworried scepticism of Montaigne. And it is parallel to Nietzsche's new interest in ethical as opposed to metaphysical problems, the drawing-in of his mind from the contemplation of absolutes to the business of living:

> Auch *Montaigne* ist den Alten gegenüber ein Naturalist der Ethik, aber ein grenzenlos reicher und denkender. Wir sind gedankenlose Naturalisten, und zwar mit allem Wissen (*Nachlass* VII, 28).

This movement of Nietzsche's mind is similar to that of Montaigne himself. In Montaigne it led to the conclusion that the way of careful introspection was the only safe guarantee against error; in Nietzsche it was to lead to the positivism of such books as *Morgenröthe* (1881), combined with a psychological approach designed to clarify the rôle of truth in life and concerned with the social and personal *effects* of belief. From now on Nietzsche regards the relation of belief to life as just as important as its relation to truth. This attitude is taking shape already in the *Unzeitgemässen*, and part of the determining influence is the reading of Montaigne.

A note of this time: 'Menschen nicht als *Sache* benutzen' (*Nachlass*, VII, 210), sums up one aspect of this new interest in ethical values, for it stands in sharp opposition to the earlier genius-cult, for which ordinary men were envisaged as existing simply in order to carry on the race so that a genius might occur. The new formulation is, of course, part of the central teaching of Kant, and, indeed, the starting-point of a great number of moral philosophers. But that Nietzsche should note it now shows the direction in which his mind is moving.

We can hear already the first sounds of his brilliant analysis of human motive and conduct, in which the French moralists, particularly Montaigne, Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, at first reinforce and then supersede Schopenhauer.

But it is not until the third of these essays, *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* (1874), that he singles out Montaigne for his special praise. Here he is concerned to carry the campaign he had begun a stage further, using the figure of Schopenhauer as an illustration of the ideal educator. Attention is concentrated not on the philosopher's doctrine, but on his personality, which is ranged against the poor miserable men whom Nietzsche saw around him. The emphasis is continually on the duty of the individual to realize his potentialities and to eschew the barren imitation of habits and conventions and values formed by others. 'Es giebt in der Welt einen einzigen Weg, auf welchem Niemand gehen kann, ausser dir: wohin er führt? Frage nicht, gehe ihn' (VII, 39). It is unnecessary to do more than point out how close this is to Montaigne's final wisdom. Education, Nietzsche goes on, must therefore be not the cultivation of the individual to fit into a certain social pattern, but the inculcation into the individual of awareness of his own personality and of his duty to create his own values uninfluenced by those of others. This ideal, utterly different from that of contemporary Germany, he sees embodied in Schopenhauer. 'Ich mache mir aus einem Philosophen gerade so viel, als er im Stande ist ein Beispiel zu geben' (VII, 52). This is the key to his approach to Schopenhauer, as it was to his cultivation of the pre-Socratic thinkers, and as it is to his cultivation of Montaigne. And it is in the centre of this essay, which so clearly deals with the matter nearest his heart, that he puts these famous words:

> Ich weiss nur noch einen Schriftsteller, den ich in Betreff der Ehrlichkeit Schopenhauer gleich, ja höher noch stelle: das ist Montaigne. Dass ein solcher Mensch geschrieben hat, dadurch ist wahrlich die Lust, auf dieser Erde zu leben, vermehrt worden. Schopenhauer hat mit Montaigne noch eine zweite Eigenschaft, ausser der Ehrlichkeit, gemein: eine wirkliche erheiternde Heiterkeit (VII, 49).

Notice the criterion—honesty and cheerfulness—and notice that he places Montaigne even higher than Schopenhauer. The significance of this, at a time when the latter still represented Nietzsche's ideal, can hardly be over-estimated. And in the lines immediately following he pays Montaigne the highest tribute one writer could pay to another:

> Mir wenigstens geht es seit dem Bekanntmachen mit dieser freiesten und

kräftigsten Seele so, dass ich sagen muss, was er von Plutarch sagt: 'kaum habe ich einen Blick auf ihn geworfen, so ist mir ein Bein oder ein Flügel gewachsen' (ibid.).[1]

In the last of the *Unzeitgemässen*, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1875), he characterizes Montaigne once again:

Was der einzelne Montaigne in der Bewegtheit des Reformations-Geistes bedeutet, ein In-sich-zur-Ruhe-kommen, ein friedliches Für-sich-sein und Ausatmen — und so empfand ihn gewiss sein bester Leser Shakespeare — das ist jetzt die Historie für den modernen Geist (VII, 261).

These phrases exactly describe the spirit of the *Essais*, especially the third book, which we have seen Nietzsche was reading.

3

We have noticed the kinship of his spirit with that of Rousseau, so that it is not surprising to find Nietzsche saying important things about him in the third *Unzeitgemässe*. He contrasts here three different conceptions of man: that of Rousseau, that of Goethe and that of Schopenhauer, and though the third is naturally praised above the others, there is genuine sympathy in his account of Rousseau's. Of the three, he says:

. . . hat das erste Bild das grösste Feuer und ist der populärsten Wirkungen gewiss. . . . Von dem ersten ist eine Kraft ausgegangen, welche zu ungestümen Revolutionen drängte und noch drängt: denn bei allen sozialistischen Erzitterungen und Erbeben ist es immer noch der Mensch Rousseaus welcher sich, wie der alte Typhon unter dem Ätna bewegt. Gedrückt und halb zerquetscht durch hochmütige Kasten, erbarmungslosen Reichthum, durch Priester und schlechte Erziehung verderbt und vor sich selbst durch lächerliche Sitten beschämt, ruft der Mensch in seiner Noth die 'heilige Natur' an und fühlt plötzlich, dass sie von ihm so fern ist, wie irgend ein epikurischer Gott. Seine Gebete erreichen sie nicht; so tief ist er in das Chaos der Unnatur versunken. Er wirft höhnisch all den bunten Schmuck von sich, welcher ihm kurz vorher gerade sein Menschlichstes schien, seine Künste und

[1] His reference is to Montaigne, II, 5, p. 154 (Villey's edition in three vols. 1930–31, which is quoted throughout): Je ne le puis si peu accointer que je n'en tire cuisse ou aisle. Nietzsche's version is therefore a mistranslation. Marie Baumgartner, his French translator, pointed this out to him, and he replied that the German translation was wrong also. He suggests altering the wording so as not to attribute this remark to Montaigne, and concludes ruefully that before he idolizes Montaigne he should at least understand him properly (7 April, 1875; *Ges. Br.* I, 310). This point, noted by Andler (I, 157), throws an interesting sidelight on Nietzsche's Montaigne-reading, proving that he 'idolized' him, and habitually read him in French, consulting the German translation only after his own version had been called in question. He possessed the *Essais* in both languages. Bouillier (*La Renommée de Montaigne en Allemagne* (1921) considers that the German translation used by Nietzsche must have been that of Titius (three vols. 1753), since a later quotation in German is textually taken from this (XVI, 344 from Montaigne, I, 23, p. 128), and Nietzsche wrote to his mother asking for the first volume of his three-volume edition (20 September, 1884, *Ges. Br.* V, 565). This mistranslation about Plutarch, he says, is not in Titius I have been unable to see Titius' translation and therefore cannot confirm this, but it accords with the Nietzsche-Baumgartner correspondence.

Wissenschaften, die Vorzüge seines verfeinerten Lebens, er schlägt mit der Faust wider die Mauern, in deren Dämmerung er so entartet ist, und schreit nach Licht, Sonne, Wald und Fels. Und wenn er ruft: 'nur die Natur ist gut, nur der natürliche Mensch ist menschlich', so verachtet er sich und sehnt sich über sich selber hinaus: eine Stimmung, in welcher die Seele zu furchtbaren Entschlüssen bereit ist, aber auch das Edelste und Seltenste aus ihren Tiefen herauf ruft (VII, 72 f.).

These three, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Rousseau, are his representatives of the three possible attitudes of 'modern' man in the face of the problem of civilization. That Goethe should seem thus significant is not surprising, and Schopenhauer is, of course, Nietzsche's ideal. But that the trio should be completed by Rousseau calls for some explanation. We know that if Nietzsche were seeking a figure to typify for him the qualities of the French genius, he would turn to earlier centuries than the eighteenth. If he had contrasted Goethe and Schopenhauer with Montaigne or Pascal there would be no occasion for surprise. But that he should feel Rousseau peculiarly significant in this connection seems inexplicable, especially when we remember that Nietzsche's attitude to him was usually one of contempt. Indeed, the passage just quoted is one of the few which is sympathetic to him. Here Nietzsche sees quite clearly and rightly the greatness of Rousseau and his importance as perhaps the most powerful single influence in moulding the spirit of to-day. And he emphasizes just that 'explosiveness' in Rousseau which responds to a fundamental quality in himself, and in his characterization of him and his impact, especially in the last lines of the quotation, we can see something of the spirit in Nietzsche himself which is later, when Zarathustra proclaims the Superman, to put him, too, in the same position as he here describes.

4

Two other French writers were diligently cultivated by Nietzsche at this period—Pascal and La Rochefoucauld. The first was probably introduced to him by Schopenhauer, who frequently quotes him, and by Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*, where he is discussed at length. Both these were familiar to Nietzsche some years before he came to Basle, and it is likely that he read Pascal himself while still a student. At Basle, Pascal was one of the authors read at the Overbeck soirées,[1] and from then on Nietzsche cultivated him all his life. Throughout his works are sprinkled references to Pascal, and a copy

[1] Cf. Bernoulli, I, 243 ff. Here Pascal was certainly read in French.

of the *Gedanken, Fragmente und Briefe* was in Nietzsche's library.[1] In these first years at Basle he is reading Pascal simply as a moralist, valuing his penetrating analysis of human motive and human society, without seriously concerning himself with the conclusions Pascal draws from it.[2] He refers to him in the essay on Strauss in these terms:

> Nun meint Pascal überhaupt, dass die Menschen so angelegentlich ihre Geschäfte und ihre Wissenschaften betreiben, um nur damit den wichtigsten Fragen zu entfliehen, die jede Einsamkeit, jede wirkliche Musse, ihnen aufdringen würde, eben jenen Fragen nach dem Warum, Woher, Wohin (VI, 179).

He here betrays an early interest in one of Pascal's cardinal analyses—that of 'divertissement', and its rôle in stilling within us the questioning which must otherwise make us despair. Man cannot bear the thought of his fundamental misery and is therefore driven to seek any means to occupy his mind (cf. *Pensées* 217, 139, 168, 166, etc.).[3] Nietzsche follows this closely in such passages as this, from the essay on Schopenhauer:

> Wir fürchten uns, wenn wir allein und stille sind, dass uns etwas in das Ohr geraunt werde, und so hassen wir die Stille und betäuben uns durch Geselligkeit (VII, 84).

There is an affinity here between the two men which is more profound than it appears, and which comes out more and more as Nietzsche develops. Both he and Pascal are essentially lonely introspectives, both had to withdraw from society to do their work. The longing for solitude in Nietzsche's later years is parallel to Pascal's withdrawal to Port-Royal. Both, in fact, were aware very keenly of the *dangers* of life in society, which are in part to be seen in this analysis of 'divertissement'.

In Pascal, this is combined with the view that man's only claim to greatness is his power of thought, yet if he thinks he recognizes his misery and therefore the generality of men refuse to think, throwing away, so to speak, their birthright (cf. *Pensées* 146). This is plainly connected with the central part of Pascal's analysis of man, the famous metaphor of the thinking reed:

> L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature; mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser: une vapeur, une

[1] This was the 1865 translation, based on Faugère's edition of 1844. This appears to be the book Nietzsche used throughout his life, and it is unlikely that he read Pascal in French after the early days at Basle.

[2] Pascal is first mentioned by Nietzsche in the essay *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (IV, 160 f.).

[3] The Pensées are quoted from Brunschvicg's edition.

goutte d'eau suffit pour le tuer. Mais, quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt, et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui: l'univers n'en sait rien (347).

Par l'espace, l'univers me comprend et m'engloutit comme un point: par la pensée je le comprends (348) (cf. also *Pensées* 397, 346, etc.).

We can see the same train of thought in Nietzsche at this time:

So lange Jemand nach dem Leben wie nach einem Glücke verlangt, hat er den Blick noch nicht über den Horizont des Thieres hinausgehoben, nur dass er mit mehr Bewusstsein will, was das Thier in blindem Drange sucht —

Aber es giebt Augenblicke, *wo wir dies begreifen*. . . . (VII, 82).

And in a sketch from this period we read:

Was hätten wir an uns zu bewundern, was bliebe uns fest? Alles ist gering. Wahrheit gegen sich ist das Höchste, was wir von uns erreichen: denn die meisten beschwindeln sich. Mit einer herzlichen Selbstverachtung kommen wir auf unsere Höhe . . . (*Nachlass* VII, 143).

Here Nietzsche's thought is similar to Montaigne's. But it is extremely significant that he should go on here to characterize our highest wisdom as 'Selbstverachtung', since it is precisely in the depth and consciousness of this very quality that Pascal stands apart from the rest of the French moralists. And two other fragments from this time show how Nietzsche's thought is moving along lines very similar to Pascal's:

Jede Philosophie muss das können, was ich fordere, einen Menschen concentriren . . . (*Nachlass* VII, 20).[1]

Alles Handeln muss allmählich gefärbt werden von der Ueberzeugung, dass unser Leben abzubüssen ist (ibid. VII, 140).

These two things are connected—if our actions are governed by the thought that each one is our whole existence writ small we shall achieve a concentration of the personality which is attainable in no other way. This strain of thought in Nietzsche is to play an important part in the elaboration of the idea of Eternal Recurrence. Pascal uses this argument in leading up to the 'pari':

Si vous ne vous souciez guère de savoir la vérité, en voilà assez pour vous laisser en repos. Mais si vous désirez de tout votre coeur de la connaître, ce n'est pas assez, regardez au détail. C'en serait assez pour une question de philosophie, mais ici, où il va de tout . . . (226).

In this emphasis on the union of our theory and our practice, on the 'transcendental' significance of human action, Nietzsche and Pascal are at one. But it is plain that at this time Nietzsche is reading Pascal

[1] The similarity between this and Pascal's thought is no mere coincidence. Three pages farther on the Frenchman is explicitly linked to Nietzsche's idol, Schopenhauer (VII, 23).

predominantly as a critic of human illusion, a sceptic, and a more profound psychologist than Montaigne. He has not yet seriously considered his metaphysical conclusions. He is 'using' Pascal—drawing on his penetrating insight into human action and human society, rather than grappling with the essential problems which he raises. This is true despite the hint, quoted above, of a genuine analysis of man as a 'thinking reed'. We shall see that later on Nietzsche comes to draw more and more on Pascal's analysis of 'man without God', and to concern himself also more and more with the problems exposed by it.

5

The introduction of La Rochefoucauld to Nietzsche was made by Rohde just before his friend was called to Basle. Rohde writes of the *Maximes*, which he has just been reading, summing up their attitude as a reduction of all human motive to the drive of egotism, which seems to him an unsatisfactory over-simplification.[1] At this time Nietzsche was not apparently very interested and there is no mention of the Frenchman in his letters. But we have the testimony of Ida Overbeck that at Basle, La Rochefoucauld was one of his favourites. Nevertheless, there is no mention of him in the works of this period,[2] though we may assume that, like Montaigne and Pascal, he is helping to mould Nietzsche's view of human nature. It is during these early years at Basle that his conception of personality, and especially of the ultimate mystery at the roots of the personality, is being elaborated, and displacing the rather cocksure dogmatism of his early mystical faith. We may, perhaps, see something of this in the essay on Schopenhauer. Nietzsche speaks of the personality here as an entity ultimately quite inexplicable and mysterious, a unique miracle, as he calls it, with its inner core essentially unanalysable and irrational. This is fundamentally La Rochefoucauld's view too. The *Maximes* start from a lively apprehension of the complexity of the human character, and the essential absence of parallelism between living and thinking. The prominence which La Rochefoucauld gives to the motive of 'amour-propre' should not lead us to designate his psychology as over-simplified. And Nietzsche's emphasis in this

[1] Rohde to Nietzsche, 24 November, 1868 (*Ges. Br.* II, 99).

[2] In the *Geburt der Tragodie*, Nietzsche, speaking of the mixture of pleasure and pain in the Dionysian ecstasy, uses the phrase '... wie Heilmittel an tödtliche Gifte erinnern' (III, 29). This may be a reminiscence of La Rochefoucauld's maxime 182, though it is equally possible that it is inspired by a remark of Montaigne's (III, 1, p. 11).

same direction is not specific evidence of the effect of reading La Rochefoucauld, but it is at least evidence that he is already preoccupied with the problem of the human personality, the ultimate essence of the self, which is exactly the subject of the *Maximes*.

In the movement of Nietzsche's thought, then, from the *Geburt der Tragödie* onwards, we can detect a turn away from the consideration of the absolutes towards that of the individual human personality, away from the ultimate function of art and religion to the problems of education and the integration of culture into actual living. In this development the reading of the French moralists has played an extremely important part. But this movement does not reach its final term until the repudiation by Nietzsche of both his masters Schopenhauer and Wagner, and his exchange of a predominantly idealist attitude for the thorough-going positivism which runs through his works of the middle period.

CHAPTER 3

REPUDIATION OF THE MASTERS

I

NIETZSCHE'S letters during the writing of the essay on Schopenhauer (spring and summer, 1874) show that, despite the happiness of celebrating one to whom he owed so much, there was an undertone of doubt and uncertainty in his mind, which was frequently expressed as dissatisfaction with his life as a professor.[1] The uncertainty may well be connected with the fact that though Schopenhauer's personality remains and will always remain an ideal to which he feels constantly drawn, the philosopher's standpoint and his own cannot in the last instance be reconciled. He has been critical of Schopenhauer's conclusions for some years, but now he is beginning to feel that the whole pessimistic and ascetic cast of mind of his hero is utterly antipathetic to his own convictions. So it is not surprising that in this essay on Schopenhauer no word is said about the Schopenhauerian doctrines, but attention is concentrated on the personality of the man, which is expressly contrasted with that of the 'pure' philosopher in the person of Kant. And his description of Schopenhauer, of his isolation, of the dangers such men as he must face in society, of the doubts which must oppress them, of the yearning which tortures them—all this makes it increasingly clear that for 'Schopenhauer' one should read 'Nietzsche' throughout, though Nietzsche himself is not conscious of this till later.[2] This essay is autobiographical, it is a projection of Nietzsche's own ideal on to the figure of his teacher, and it is at once an effort to enlist Schopenhauer on his side and also to free himself from him. It is hail and farewell in one.

During the writing of this essay he planned a whole series of *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, and *Wir Philologen*, which was originally to be the fourth, although left in the form of fragments, is coherent enough for its main directions to be clear. It reinforces the direct attack on the prevailing view of scholarship in Germany, which we have seen already. Nietzsche repeats the conviction that only great

[1] Cf. the letters to Gersdorff, 1 April, 1874 (*Ges. Br.* I, 271), to his mother, 1 February, 1874 *Ges. Br.* V, 287), and to his sister, 30 July, 1874 (*Ges. Br.* V, 300).

[2] In *Ecce Homo*, in the discussion of the *Unzeitgemassen* (XXI, 234 f.).

individuals make a culture great, and his admiration for the Greeks goes with a strong emphasis on the dependence of their culture on slavery. They recognized, he says, that culture can never be a quality of all, but only of an élite (VII, 82). And Nietzsche's devotion to the genius-ideal is plain in such passages as this:

Meine Religion, wenn ich irgend Etwas noch so nennen darf, liegt in der Arbeit für die Erzeugung des Genius (VII, 224).

This fragmentary essay shows how Nietzsche is bringing his ideas on Greece and Greek culture within the orbit of his educational programme, and linking them up more and more with his onslaught on the comfortable mediocrity of his time. And it also shows many of the ideas we associate with his mature thought already more than half-formed in his mind. But during this time he must have been painfully coming to the realization that he would have to break with Wagner, whom he loved. With the news that *Parsifal* was on the stocks the crisis within him was coming to a head. He began to realize the magnitude of the task he must undertake, quite alone, without Wagner as a constant inspiration and solace. And it is in this mood that he composed the last of the *Unzeitgemässen*, in honour of the launching of Bayreuth, during the year from the summer of 1875 to June 1876.

Apparently this is a pæan of praise for the master and a forecast of the wonderful new dawn of culture which his work will inaugurate. But underneath there is continually an undertone of despair, that Wagner is in fact taking a direction that Nietzsche cannot approve, mingled with the hope that this passionate essay may yet not be too late to bring him back to the right way. Nietzsche is pleading with Wagner to be what he had always taken him to be, and trying to convince himself that his adoration of Wagner was, and is, not misplaced. Devotion and love, then, are here, but also the sad resignation of an ideal, the disillusionment of a dream shattered and the hope of recreating it from the pieces. Both Wagner and Cosima were delighted with the essay, interpreting it as a straightforward eulogy of Bayreuth, but to Nietzsche this was only a further piece of evidence of the gulf growing between himself and them. In this work we find Wagner interpreted, as Schopenhauer had been before, very much out of Nietzsche's own aspirations and ideals. We find a similar theory of tragic art to that expressed in the *Geburt der Tragödie*:

Je schwieriger die Erkenntniss von den Gesetzen des Lebens wird, um so inbrünstiger begehren wir nach dem Scheine jener Vereinfachung, wenn auch nur

für Augenblicke, um so grösser wird die Spannung zwischen der allgemeinen Erkenntniss der Dinge und dem geistig-sittlichen Vermögen des Einzelnen. *Damit der Bogen nicht breche*, ist die Kunst da . . . (VII, 272).

But this is in fact an indication that the metaphysical foundation of the aesthetics of the *Geburt der Tragödie* is no longer present. Nietzsche had pronounced in the earlier work that the world was only justified as an aesthetic phenomenon, and the whole Dionysian mysticism lay behind the view. But now art is seen as something much less ultimate, an activity which prevents man from over-straining himself, not a key to the eternal mystery of life. The change here is fundamental to Nietzsche, and is what our investigation hitherto would lead us to expect. And it is partly this which is behind his treatment of Wagner in this essay.

Wagner is described as the herald and prophet of a new tragic art, but there is an underlying analysis of him as essentially a man of the theatre, and his life as a piece of play-acting. Near the end Nietzsche describes his ideal of freedom of the spirit in these words:

. . . dass der freie Mensch sowohl gut als böse sein kann, dass eben der unfreie Mensch eine Schande der Natur ist . . . endlich, dass Jeder, der frei werden will, es durch sich selber werden muss, und dass Niemandem die Freiheit als ein Wundergeschenk in den Schooss fällt (VII, 334).

These words, which have little relevance to Wagner, show how far Nietzsche has moved since the writing of the *Geburt der Tragödie*. His early cult of the genius is not yet radically changed, but it is now expressed in a totally different way, as a striving to attain freedom. The 'freier Geist', the ideal of later works, is already coming in his mind to supersede the 'genius' of his earlier thought. And the linking of this conception to a way of life 'sowohl gut als böse' is the beginning of a movement in his consciousness which will finally take him 'beyond good and evil'.

But this does not complete the story. From the start Nietzsche had made continual concessions to his master. The whole early Dionysian view was not in harmony with his adoration of Wagner, and in the *Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche had trimmed his thought to bring it into line with the Wagner-cult. There had been some friction since then, and Nietzsche had moved a long way from his early uncritical adoration. From January 1874 he had begun to write various sketches on Wagner, which he naturally kept secret, and which start from the question whether it was not perhaps the fault of the master and not of the German people that Bayreuth was not prospering. He comes to the conclusion that in the last instance Wagner subordinated

music to the theatre, and was himself in essence not a musician but a play-actor, and his art a flight from reality. And now his last desperate effort to 'reclaim' his master has been totally misunderstood by the one man, Wagner himself, to whom it was directed, so that the events which actually precipitated the break were of relatively little consequence. Nietzsche visited Bayreuth in July 1876 to attend the festival performance of the *Ring* and found his last illusions about Wagner shattered beyond repair. Wagner, he saw now, was a charlatan, and his music a sham, designed not to stir the German people to heroism and culture, but to pander to their innate spiritual laziness and their comfortable belief in their own excellence. He left Bayreuth in disgust, since Wagner, far from bemoaning the obvious failure of the hopes they had shared, was plainly enjoying his enormous commercial success.[1]

A number of factors played a part in bringing about this disillusionment with Wagner, and thus contributing to the radical volte-face in Nietzsche's thought which is apparent immediately afterwards. The ostensible cause was the discovery of a Christian strain in his music, culminating in *Parsifal*, which was anathema to Nietzsche. But, as we have seen, the personal reasons go farther back—the rejection of the man Wagner, as well as the musician, was only the final term of a process which had imperceptibly continued for some years. And a less easily evaluated factor was Nietzsche's experience with Cosima, who understood the *Geburt der Tragödie* better than Wagner did, and saw what Nietzsche was trying to do in this and in the Wagner-essay, but nevertheless sided with Wagner against him.[2]

2

But all this was subsidiary to the real movement of Nietzsche's thought, which was away from Schopenhauer and Wagner, and away from the whole cultural and intellectual ideal which these two originally represented for him. The most obvious characteristic of this development was the modification of the extreme anti-intellectualist position he had at first taken up, and here his reading of Voltaire played an important part.

We may assume that he was acquainted with some at least of Voltaire's works from his school and student days. He mentions him

[1] Cf. the letters to his sister, 5 and 6 August, 1876 (*Ges. Br.* V, 345 ff.).

[2] Towards the end of Nietzsche's life it becomes clear that he cast himself in the rôle of Dionysos to Cosima's Ariadne and Wagner's Theseus (cf. the *Dionysos-Dithyramben* and the letters immediately before his madness).

first in one of the sketches on French classical drama destined for the *Geburt der Tragödie*, but excluded from it. And in the essay on Strauss he continually instances Voltaire and Lessing as examples of what Strauss tries, and dismally fails, to be.[1] He castigates Strauss for his pretensions to ape the Frenchman, as in general German culture is aping French, without achieving any of its real qualities (VI, 191 ff.). It is plain that Voltaire is linked in Nietzsche's mind with Lessing, and embodies for him an ideal which he expresses in terms of grace, elegance and freedom. It is this conception which he later formulates in his idea of the 'freier Geist'—the thinker who is not bound by custom, convention, even by 'truth', who follows his ideal as a Don Juan, who regards a conviction as a shackle, who admits no allegiance except to his own honesty and his own intellectual freedom. As epigraph to the last draft of the beginning of *Wir Philologen* he quotes Voltaire's maxim: 'Il faut dire la vérité et s'immoler' (VII, 217).

But though he admires Voltaire and is continually using him as an example of the emancipated thinking which is his ideal, it is plain that at first he is still bound by what Voltaire would call irrational prejudices, and is paying no more than lip-service to the Frenchman. But there is in Voltaire's work a sustained investigation of the principles of knowledge, of the limits of human knowledge and of the impossibility of expressing the final truth, which Nietzsche must have increasingly regarded as similar to his own experience during these years.

> Ainsi arrêtés dès le premier pas, et nous repliant toujours sur nous-mêmes, nous sommes effrayés de nous chercher toujours et de ne nous trouver jamais. Nul de nos sens n'est explicable ('Philosophe Ignorant' XI, *Œuvres* 32, 88).[2]

This is akin to Nietzsche's increasing conviction of the ultimate mystery and illogicality in all things, in us and around us, and his gradual rejection of mystical dogma. But Voltaire does not emphasize the point, except to dismiss it:

> Dans le doute où nous sommes tous deux, je ne vous dis pas avec Pascal: prenez le plus sûr. Il n'y a rien de sûr dans l'incertitude. Il ne s'agit pas ici de parier mais d'examiner; il faut juger, et notre volonté ne détermine pas notre jugement. . . . Nous ne raisonnons guère en métaphysique que sur des probabilités, nous nageons tous dans une mer dont nous n'avons jamais vu le rivage. Malheur à ceux qui se

[1] Nietzsche, of course, knew Strauss' *Voltaire: Sechs Vorträge* from which he quotes in this essay. In this discussion of Voltaire he uses for the first time the symbol of dancing for the free activity of the thinker, which is to culminate in the figure of Zarathustra. It is significant that the image which is of such cardinal importance in his later work is suggested to him by the reading of Voltaire.

[2] Voltaire is quoted from the 1785–89 edition (70 vols.) except the *Lettres Philosophiques*, which are referred to in Lanson's edition.

battent en nageant (*Dict. Phil. Dieu, Dieux. Œuvres* 39, 318 f.) (cf. *Lettres Philosophiques* II, 17–II, 190).

In reply to Pascal, he says:

Si l'homme était parfait, il serait Dieu, et ces prétendues contrariétés que vous appelez contradictions sont des ingrédients nécessaires qui entrent dans le composé de l'homme qui est ce qu'il doit être (*Lettres Philosophiques* II, 188 f.).

So:

Travaillons sans raisonner,[1] dit Martin, c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable (*Candide, Œuvres* 44, 342).

In all this Voltaire is worlds away from Nietzsche. There is in fact no similarity of temperament in the two men.[2] But this renunciation of a fine critical mind of the task of searching for the ultimate truth, this self-limitation to the sphere of what can be known and not merely believed, undoubtedly impressed Nietzsche, and played some part in turning him away from the mysticism of his early work to the positivism of his middle period. Furthermore, the wit of Voltaire was one of the best antidotes to the nebulous genius-cult of his youth. Wit and Wagner do not mix, and we may conclude that Voltaire was partly responsible for Nietzsche's break with the latter.

3

It is probably the wit he found in Chamfort and Vauvenargues which attracted him to these writers too. His sister's present of Vauvenargues and La Bruyère for Christmas 1870 seems to show that he was reading them earlier than this, though to judge from Ida Overbeck's reminiscences he was not attracted to either of them yet, as he was, for instance, to Fontenelle. Nevertheless, it is apparent that he was reading all these during this time, as well as the authors we have already discussed. In 1875 Paul Rée, who was to play an important part in his development, published his first book, *Psychologische Beobachtungen*, a series of 'maximes' in imitation of La Rochefoucauld. Nietzsche liked the book, but Cosima saw nothing of value in it and remarked to Elizabeth that she could not understand Nietzsche admiring it so much, since he was so well acquainted with the great Frenchmen, 'Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, and so on'.[3]

[1] 'raisonner' here is equivalent to the elaboration of metaphysical theories, not the activity of the reason as such.

[2] This explains why in all Nietzsche's professions of admiration for Voltaire, he is never passionate. His heart is never engaged, only his intellect. This is in great contrast to his attitude to Rousseau, where the reverse is the case.

[3] Quoted in Förster-Nietzsche, II, 272 f.

Neither Chamfort nor Vauvenargues is mentioned in the works of these years, and there are no grounds for assuming that they have yet exerted any influence on Nietzsche. Of eighteenth-century writers, apart from Rousseau and Voltaire, he mentions Diderot once (VII, 27), and it is known that at the Overbeck soirées Sainte-Beuve's essay on him was discussed; and Maupertuis is once referred to (V, 468), but not in a way implying first-hand knowledge. And of nineteenth-century writers we can confidently say that Nietzsche is as yet not well informed. Despite his sister's present of Stendhal in 1871, there is no evidence in the works or letters of any interest in that writer. And Nietzsche mentions Renan,[1] Laplace (IV. 272), and Balzac (VII, 28), but without any indication of first-hand knowledge.[2]

In seeking the causes in his French reading of his emancipation from Schopenhauer and Wagner we have considered Voltaire in the first instance, but it is a mistake to ascribe too much influence to him. Nietzsche's reception of him is always a matter of intellectual agreement rather than passionate fellow-feeling. He is at this time delighted with him, but this only at the end of a long process of intellectual development in which his guides have been not Voltaire but the earlier giants, Montaigne, Pascal, and La Rochefoucauld. It is these three who are mainly responsible for turning his mind to the problems of actual human conduct. This development is not yet completed, but the new direction is clear. It is not simply the abandonment of the spurious panacea which Wagner offered, nor the conquest of Schopenhauer's pessimism, but much more the determination to see the trees as well as the wood, to be just and accurate, to seek the value of living in living itself. Culture is being re-defined for him. The influence of the great French moralists is paramount here. Voltaire pointed a mocking finger at revealed truth in general and thus helped to call in question the whole romantic cultivation of the Wagnerian myth. But the real antithesis to Wagner is not the savage destructiveness of Voltaire but the easy unruffled scepticism of Montaigne. And as with Wagner, so with Schopenhauer, whose philosophy is in the last instance a dead end. In its refusal to be deceived into any affirmation of value in living it is a philosophy for a man to die with, not for a youth to grow up in.

[1] Only indirectly. He has read an essay of Carl Fuchs on Renan and writes to him about it (28 April, 1874; *Ges. Br.* I, 273).

[2] One modern French writer he praises—Schuré, whose *Drame musical* he recommends to Gersdorff (21 July, 1875; *Ges. Br.* I, 342). Here he says: 'Für mein Gefühl ist alles Französische zu beredt, und, bei Behandlung solcher Dinge wie die Musik, etwas zu lärmend und öffentlich. . . .' In some respects, we may say, Nietzsche was still under the spell of Wagner!

In this direction there is no more to be said. Without some counteracting influence the cult of Schopenhauer might have frozen Nietzsche in the aesthetic pessimism of his early years. This counteracting influence was provided by the French moralists. Montaigne's profound conviction of the supreme value and joy of living is the direct opposite to Schopenhauer's view that our only worth-while achievement in life is the minimization of pain. This is not to suggest that Nietzsche was swung against Schopenhauer by Montaigne and repudiated him. Schopenhauer remained with him throughout his life and was never thrown overboard. But Montaigne did come to balance him and to affirm the opposite view of the goodness of life, to which Nietzsche more and more inclined. After the early years it may be said that Nietzsche set himself the task of finding an answer to Schopenhauer's pessimism—he had to 'settle with' him as he had eventually to 'settle with' Christianity—and Montaigne is perhaps his greatest ally in this task. The essay on Schopenhauer is the beginning of this attempt to overcome Schopenhauer, and it is precisely here that Nietzsche places his highest praise of Montaigne.

And in a less obvious way La Rochefoucauld and Pascal played their part in this process too. At this time Nietzsche is reading Pascal simply as a sceptical critic of human illusion and human motive, so that these two writers exert their influence in a single direction and appeal to Nietzsche by their uncompromising honesty and depth of psychological penetration. After reading so much of the equally penetrating but essentially distorted pessimism of Schopenhauer, who builds an enormous edifice of intricate thinking on his psychological insight, it must have been somewhat of a relief to come to La Rochefoucauld, who in some respects also merits the name pessimist, but who yet builds none of those rather tiringly subtle metaphysical constructions on his appreciation of human life, who is content to state what he feels to be the facts without fitting them to a metaphysical theory which Nietzsche could no longer share. And so far Pascal only reinforces La Rochefoucauld. Nietzsche has not yet felt the chasm before him. He is not yet ready for the full message of Pascal. So far the latter's action is destructive, a tearing-away of illusions. Later, when the agony of the human situation becomes more apparent to him, he will read Pascal more profoundly, and find in him, too, an opponent with whom he must grapple in a combat which engages him more fully even than his emancipation from those masters of his youth, Schopenhauer and Wagner.

II

THE SCEPTIC (1876–1882)

CHAPTER 4

THE ABANDONMENT OF IDEALS

I

NIETZSCHE'S flight from Bayreuth in July 1876 was only the final expression of a malaise which had been growing in him for some years. And other things, too, made a change in his life inevitable. His eyes were giving him great trouble, and he was thoroughly tired of his work at the university.[1] So when his friend Malwida von Meysenbug invited him to spend a year with her in Italy, he accepted,[2] and was granted a year's sick leave. He travelled down to stay with her at Sorrento in October 1876, and we have an account of him on the journey by a fellow passenger, Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg:

> Mit sich führte mein Partner die *Maximes de La Rochefoucauld*, dran sich die ersten Fäden unseres Gespräches knüpften. Er pries die Gabe der Franzosen, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Condorcet, Pascal vor allen, einen Gedanken derartig zuzuspitzen, dass er an Schärfe und Relief mit einer Medaille wetteifern könne. Auch sprach er von der Sprödigkeit des Stoffes, der durch Anwendung der schwierigsten Form künstlerische Vollendung erlange. Diese Forderung unterstützte er durch folgende Verse, die mir, ihrer Prägung wegen, in Ohr haften blieben:
>
> Oui, l'oeuvre sort plus belle
> D'une matière au travail rebelle —
> Vers, marbre, onyx, émail —
> Point de contraintes fausses,
> Mais que pour marcher droit —
> Muse, tu chausses
> Un cothurne étroit.[3]

We shall consider later the implications of the criterion which he applies here to the authors mentioned, but let us note the significance of the fact that at this time, having at last put Wagner and all that he stood for behind him, he is so deeply immersed in La Rochefoucauld that he carries the *Maximes* in his pocket and talks at length about him to a chance acquaintance on the train. That he also quotes

[1] Cf. his letters to Gersdorff, 18 and 23 January, 1876 (*Ges. Br.* I, 363, 366), and to Malwida, 11 May, 1876 (*Ges. Br.* III, 526).

[2] The exchange of letters on this subject was from 30 April to 26 September, 1876 (*Ges. Br.* III, 514–31).

[3] Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg: *Nietzsche im Spiegelbilde seiner Schrift*, p. 27. The verses are from Gautier's poem *L'art*.

Gautier from memory[1] throws a significant light on the rapidly increasing breadth of his French reading.

It is from this time only that he may be said actually to study La Rochefoucauld. This was partly a consequence of the movement of his own mind, which now found the Frenchman an admirable foil to his own disillusionment and scepticism, and partly due also to the influence of Paul Rée, with whom he became very friendly at this time. Rée's mind was completely intellectual and positivist, and his *Psychologische Beobachtungen* (1875) is a faithful imitation of the negative 'cynical' side of La Rochefoucauld, whom he greatly admired. Nietzsche was one of the few who championed it.

Malwida von Meysenbug, a middle-aged bluestocking and ardent Wagnerian, who took an almost maternal interest in Nietzsche, had not invited him alone, but also Rée and a Dr. Brenner. All four of the party were writing books, Nietzsche working on the first part of *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*. Their cloistered life of study at Malwida's house, the Villa Rubinacci at Sorrento, was perhaps the nearest he ever came to realizing his ideal of a modern academy of emancipated spirits. The greater part of the day was spent by each in his own room, but all four met for meals and for reading and discussion in the evening. The Wagners came to Sorrento for November 1876, and it was here that Nietzsche had his last conversation with the master.[2] But the spell was broken and there could no longer be real intercourse between them. They were already strangers. In these months at Sorrento a large programme of study was carried out. Herodotus, Plato and the Bible were read, as well as a number of French authors.[3] There is no doubt that Rée exercised a considerable influence over Nietzsche at this time, and we may be sure that La Rochefoucauld, a favourite with both of them, was also read.

It was in this sunny peace that Nietzsche wrote the greater part of *Menschliches I*, which set an entirely new direction in his thought. Here he is supremely critical, tearing away illusions, exposing the inconsistencies of every ideal and denying his own past enthusiasms.

[1] For so one judges from the account given. Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg says in a note that she did not identify the quotation till some time later.

[2] See Pourtalès: *Nietzsche en Italie*, 1929, pp. 25 ff., for a perceptive if rather romanticized account of these days in Sorrento. Brenner's letters describing the life at the Villa Rubinacci are reproduced in Bernoulli, I, 198 ff. Cf. also Förster-Nietzsche, II, 270 ff., and Andler, III, 29 ff.

[3] Those mentioned by Elizabeth are Voltaire, Diderot, Michelet and Charles de Rémusat (Förster-Nietzsche, II, 277). Nietzsche mentioned these and Daudet in a letter to Marie Baumgartner, 27 January, 1877 (*Ges. Br.* I, 392). Cf. Andler, III, 32 ff.

The volte-face could hardly be more marked. His real disillusionment is not only with Wagner or with Schopenhauer, but with what these men had signified for him, the noble ideals of culture and education which had inspired all his earlier work. Disillusionment not only with his own ideals, but with his own efforts to realize them or contribute to their realization. And Rée, with his brutal cynicism and scepticism, was a companion who came to Nietzsche at just the moment when his views would be most readily accepted. On the appearance of *Menschliches*, Nietzsche was at first not unpleased to hear his new attitude labelled 'Réealismus', and he paid tribute to Rée in the book,[1] though later he hotly repudiated any suggestion that he had been under the other's influence.[2] The truth would appear to be that Rée crystallized and precipitated the expression of ideas and attitudes which were already making themselves apparent in Nietzsche's thinking. This is further strengthened by the fact that the new direction was set before Nietzsche came to Sorrento. In the first heat of his disgust with Bayreuth he had composed a number of aphorisms which he intended to call *Der Pflugschar*. These show how his mind was developing, and that extremely quickly, before he left Germany. They were dictated to his friend Peter Gast, and taken to Sorrento, where they formed the nucleus of the new book, which was finally published after he returned to Basle in 1877. It appeared in the spring of 1878 with a dedication to Voltaire.

2

And it is indeed the spirit of Voltaire which hovers over the whole, of the sceptical and emancipated Voltaire, deriding, gently and savagely by turns, the ideals and principles to which men pay homage. Nietzsche is here clearing the ground. The 'Freigeist' ideal, which now emerges, is negative and destructive, but only by this sort of destructiveness, he feels, can genuine freedom of the spirit be attained, without which no construction is possible. So we have continual reiteration of the same points. There are no absolute truths or values, everything is in a flux of change (sect. 2, VIII, 17). All belief is a reflection of our state of pain or pleasure (sect. 18, VIII, 33). Examples of this are the belief in free-will and in the identity of phenomena, so that such criticism undermines the whole basis of any metaphysical

[1] Cf. sects. 36, 37, 133 (VIII, 57, 59, 130).

[2] Cf. *Ecce Homo*, where he maintains that for 'Rée' one should substitute 'Nietzsche' throughout (XXI, 242). Also the *Vorrede* to the *Genealogie*, sects. 4 ff., where, referring to a slightly later period, he says he repudiated Rée from the start (XVI, 272 ff.).

thinking. The desperate pessimism of Nietzsche's attitude is everywhere apparent. Human life is deeply rooted in untruth, he says (sect. 34; VIII, 50). After the first section, giving the general basis of his criticism, he applies it to the history of moral notions, quoting from La Rochefoucauld and Rée, and making the point that morality is a necessary lie which protects man from his own animality (sect. 40; VIII, 62). He hints at the views on 'Herren-' and 'Sklavenmoral' which he is later to elaborate (sect. 45; VIII, 65 ff.). Moral choice is always the sacrifice of one desire for the sake of gratifying another, and no more; the pleasure-principle is the only factor which counts. Justice is the product of the clash of equally-matched forces. Life is a struggle for pleasure. There is no real basis for the distinction between good and evil (sect. 107; VIII, 104 ff.). Applying the same criticism to religious values, he goes on to deny that any religion has ever contained truth (sect. 110; VIII, 111). Religion and science are not antagonistic, since they move on different planes, but only the latter can have any claim to reveal truth. Religion is the importation of fictitious laws into nature for human purposes (sect. 111; VIII, 118). On these premisses he bases a thoroughgoing criticism and rejection of Christianity. And asceticism is only an extreme instance of the operation of the pleasure-principle: the ascetic reveres one side of himself and must therefore stigmatize the other as devilish (sect. 137; VIII, 135). The claims of art to reveal reality are disposed of in similar fashion. The whole conception of 'inspiration' is heartily derided (sect. 155; VIII, 155), and Nietzsche turns explicitly against his own earlier conception of the genius as in any way different from other men (sects. 161 ff.; VIII, 160 ff.). Finally he reaches the conclusion that the 'scientific' man is a higher stage of development than the artistic (sect. 222; VIII, 197). This Comtean exaltation of science and knowledge above art and metaphysics is the most significant feature of his thinking at this time. He begins to elaborate a theory of decadence, coupled with a purely positivistic interpretation of all moral and spiritual values. And the theory that the 'good' is essentially the strong and healthy is implicit throughout. There are hints of many later developments of his thought, even of Recurrence (sect. 247; VIII, 219). He writes in tones of inspired ecstasy of his new ideal of the free spirit (sect. 292; VIII, 253 ff.). He returns often to the idea that real culture implies a ruling caste (e.g. sect. 439; VIII, 313), a significant development of his earlier view that it implied an élite of superior men working in the spirit of the genius. He chooses as his symbol of the thoroughly emancipated spirit the figure of the

wanderer, who has severed all ties which restrict him, even those of home and his own roots (sect. 628; VIII, 400). It is most significant that for the earlier passionate hatred of Socrates and the 'theoretical' attitude he typifies is now substituted an intense admiration of the Greek and a complete assumption of the 'theoretical' position.

It is plain that the Voltairean attitude[1] is an important factor in the formation of the ideal of the free spirit. But it is not only the 'Aufklärer' Voltaire who attracts Nietzsche. In a most revealing section he emphasizes the quality of strict discipline in French classical tragedy, and goes on:

> Sich so zu binden kann absurd erscheinen: trotzdem giebt es kein anderes Mittel, um aus dem Naturalisiren herauszukommen, als sich zuerst auf das allerstärkste (vielleicht allerwillkürlichste) zu beschränken. Man lernt so allmählich mit Grazie selbst auf den schmalen Stegen schreiten, welche schwindelnde Abgründe überbrücken, und bringt die höchste Geschmeidigkeit der Bewegung als Ausbeute mit heim. . . .

He considers modern attempts to carry this out—Lessing, Goethe, Schiller—and argues that the French themselves, after Voltaire, lacked the power of creating this quality. Voltaire's *Mahomet*, he says, is the last French tragedy which embodies the essentially Greek quality of imposing 'Mass' on the stress of experience. Only the French could ever do this because they are nearest in modern times to the Greek spirit. He goes on to castigate the modern spirit, which has lost this supreme virtue of 'Mass', the sign-manual of the Greeks and the classical French writers, and, losing it, has begun the decadence of all art. He ends the section with an evaluation of Goethe's attempt to stop the rot by forming crude reality into symbolic ideality, distilling from the local and particular a general and universal significance. Goethe knew what to do, he says, but could not do it, as the Greeks and the French could (sect. 221; VIII, 189 ff.).

This passage is of cardinal importance for the appreciation of Nietzsche's development and of his reception of Voltaire. It is notably different from the remarks in the *Geburt der Tragödie* on the function and essence of art. Nietzsche's present view is a much more adult conception than the early Schopenhauerian mysticism. And it is of great significance that it is Voltaire who has suggested and partly caused the change. It may be felt that Nietzsche's exaggerated respect for Voltaire's *Mahomet* is an aberration of his taste, one of the few instances where he is led by theoretical considerations to a misplaced

[1] Early in the book he mentions Petrarch, Erasmus and Voltaire as the three great champions of enlightenment (sect. 26; VIII, 43).

enthusiasm, but the emphasis on the formal discipline and control which he is now isolating and which he sees in Voltaire and in Goethe betrays in his mind a healthy movement towards a more balanced and fruitful approach to art than before. It is significant, too, that he explicitly claims that in this Voltaire, like the classical dramatists, is following where the Greeks led. His conception of Voltaire himself is plainly changing. It is no longer purely as a 'freier Geist' that he adores him, but also as an example of the successful aesthetic approach to life—as an artist who imposes form upon the chaos of raw experience, as the last of the Frenchmen who preserved that sovereign quality of creating a harmony by form and 'Mass', which has now been lost in our romantic and decadent and thus fundamentally inartistic age. Towards the end of the book Nietzsche bemoans the demagogy and vulgarity of his time, but maintains that this cannot be cured:

> . . . denn auf diesem Gebiete gilt, was Voltaire sagt: quand la populace se mêle de raisonner, tout est perdu (sect. 438; VIII, 311)

and later he attributes the revolutionary currents of the present day to the old superstition of Rousseau, the belief in 'l'homme naturel' who has been spoilt by society. But, he says, Rousseau is quite wrong:

> Nicht *Voltaires* maassvolle, dem Ordnen Reinigen und Umbauen zugeneigte Natur, sondern *Rousseaus* leidenschaftliche Thorheiten und Halblügen haben den optimistischen Geist der Revolution wachgerufen, gegen den ich rufe: 'Écrasez l'infâme'. Durch ihn ist *der Geist der Aufklärung und der fortschreitenden Entwicklung* auf lange verscheucht worden: sehen wir zu — ein Jeder bei sich selber — ob es möglich ist, ihn wieder zurückzurufen! (sect. 463; VIII, 326).

There is nothing here of the frivolous quality in Voltaire. Nietzsche follows him in a holy crusade, but not only, as at first, against prejudice and superstition, but now mainly against the inartistic wallowing in life, without any attempt to impose the stamp of form upon it.

He originally dedicated the first part of *Menschliches* to Voltaire, and on the reverse of the title-page appeared a graceful acknowledgment of his debt to the Frenchman and his desire to signalize the centenary of his death (30 May, 1778).[1] The first edition has also a passage transcribed from Descartes' *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (in German) immediately after the title-page, but both the dedication to Voltaire and this passage were cut out of later editions, as if Nietzsche were aware that neither of these two was fundamentally akin to himself. Nevertheless, Voltaire remains for him a shining

[1] Cf. the editor's *Nachbericht* to *Menschliches* I (VIII, 415).

example of the genuinely artistic spirit triumphing over the temper of its age, which was 'naturalistic' and emotional, romantic and decadent.

3

The appreciation of this quality in Voltaire, rather than the emancipated freedom of the spirit which first attracted Nietzsche to him, is closely linked with the sympathy we noted in Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg's account of his conversation with her on the old French moralists. To her he praised the way the French, especially La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Condorcet and Pascal, brought their thought to a sharp point so that it stood out in relief, and he singled out as characteristic of them the recalcitrance of the material, which produced artistic excellence by the very difficulty of the form.[1] This is exactly the quality he admires in Voltaire. But it is La Rochefoucauld above all whom he has in mind here, and this first part of *Menschliches* (1878) contains abundant examples not only of a determination which is exactly La Rochefoucauld's to penetrate behind appearances to the deepest motives of conduct, but also a congruity of ideas in the two men and a marked similarity in their styles. Near the beginning of the book Nietzsche remarks that it is rare nowadays to find a cultured man who has read the Frenchman, and rarer still to find one who has understood him (sect. 35; VIII, 55 f.). Two pages further on he quotes a sentence from the first edition of the *Maximes*:

> Ce que le monde nomme vertu n'est d'ordinaire qu'on fantôme formé par nos passions à qui on donne un nom honnête pour faire impunément ce qu'on veut (179 in 1665 edition),

and he goes on to characterize La Rochefoucauld (and his imitator, Paul Rée) as marksmen continually hitting the target, and impressing us by their virtuosity, but nevertheless expressing a certain cynicism which irks the reader (sect. 36; VIII, 57). We have seen that it was partly owing to Rée's influence that Nietzsche cultivated La Rochefoucauld so assiduously, and the reference to his friend here shows how conscious he is of this fact. But in this tribute, too, he can be seen fighting against the impact of La Rochefoucauld. He reads him with delight and admiration,[2] but for the present he is unwilling to

[1] Cf. p. 37 above.

[2] His library contained a copy of *Sentences Réflexions et Maximes* and also a German translation, *Sätze aus der höheren Menschenkunde* (1793).

entertain his conclusions, though he feels himself being forced towards them.

He considers the idea of altruistic conduct. A being who acts on any but egoistic motives, he says, is unthinkable. The whole concept of an unegoistic action is a contradiction in terms:

Wie vermöchte das Ego ohne Ego zu handeln? . . . (he quotes an aphorism of Lichtenberg's, and goes on) . . . oder wie La Rochefoucauld sagt: 'si on croit aimer sa maîtresse pour l'amour d'elle, on est bien trompé'.[1] Wesshalb Handlungen der Liebe höher *geschätzt* werden als andere, nämlich nicht ihres Wesens, sondern ihrer *Nützlichkeit* halber, darüber vergleiche man die schon vorher erwähnten Untersuchungen 'Über den Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen' (Rée's second book). Sollte aber ein Mensch wünschen, ganz wie jener Gott Liebe zu sein, Alles für Andre, Nichts für sich zu thun, und zu wollen, so ist letzteres schon desshalb unmöglich, weil er *sehr viel* für sich thun muss, um überhaupt Anderen Etwas zu Liebe thun zu können. Sodann setzt es voraus, dass der Andre Egoist genug ist, um jene Opfer, jenes Leben für ihn, immer und immer wieder anzunehmen: so dass die Menschen der Liebe und Aufopferung ein Interesse an dem Fortbestehen der lieblosen und aufopferungsunfähigen Egoisten haben, und die höchste Moralität, um bestehen zu können, förmlich die Existenz der Unmoralität *erzwingen* müsste (wodurch sie sich freilich selber aufheben würde) (sect. 133; VIII, 130 f.).

Again, the mention of Lichtenberg and Rée shows the rôle these two, especially the latter, are playing in leading Nietzsche to La Rochefoucauld.

One may almost consider some of Nietzsche's paragraphs as commentaries or elaborations of themes struck by La Rochefoucauld. Of the latter's many *maximes* on gratitude, for instance, these two are typical:

La reconnaissance, dans la plupart des hommes, n'est qu'une forte et secrète envie de recevoir de plus grands bienfaits (298).

Il y a une certaine reconnaissance vive qui ne nous acquitte pas seulement des bienfaits que nous avons reçus, mais qui fait même que nos amis nous doivent en leur payant ce que nous leur devons (438).

Nietzsche elaborates this attitude in a passage such as this:

Der Grund, wesshalb der Mächtige dankbar ist, ist dieser. Sein Wohltäter hat sich durch seine Wohltat an der Sphäre des Mächtigen gleichsam vergriffen und sich in sie eingedrängt: nun vergreift er sich zur Vergeltung wieder an der Sphäre des Wohltäters durch den Act der Dankbarkeit. Es ist eine mildere Form der Rache. Ohne die Genugthuung der Dankbarkeit zu haben, würde der Mächtige sich unmächtig gezeigt haben und fürderhin dafür gelten (sect. 44; VIII, 65).

But he is critical of his master, as in this discussion of pity:

La Rochefoucauld trifft in der bemerkenswerthesten Stelle seines Selbst-Portraits (zuerst gedruckt 1658), gewiss das Rechte, wenn er alle Die, welche Vernunft

[1] This is *Maxime* 24 of the Third Supplement.

haben, vor dem Mitleiden warnt. . . . Vielleicht kann man noch stärker vor diesem Mitleid*haben* warnen, wenn man jenes Bedürfniss des Unglücklichen, nicht gerade als Dummheit und intellektuellen Mangel, als eine Art Geistesstörung fasst welche das Unglück mit sich bringt (und so scheint es La Rochefoucauld zu fassen), sondern als etwas ganz anderes und Bedenklicheres versteht. Vielmehr beobachte man Kinder, welche weinen und schreien, *damit* sie bemitleidet werden, und desshalb den Augenblick abwarten, wo ihr Zustand in die Augen fallen kann. . . . Und frage sich, ob nicht das beredte Klagen und Wimmern, das Zur-Schau-tragen des Unglücks im Grunde das Ziel verfolgt, den Anwesenden *weh zu thun*: das Mitleiden, welches Jene dann äussern, ist insofern eine Tröstung für die Schwachen und Leidenden, als die daran erkennen, doch wenigstens noch eine *Macht zu haben*, trotz aller ihrer Schwäche; die *Macht, wehe zu thun*. . . . Somit ist der Durst nach Bemitleidetwerden ein Durst nach Selbstgenuss, und zwar auf Unkosten der Mitmenschen; es zeigt den Menschen in der ganzen Rücksichtslosigkeit seines eigensten lieben Selbst: nicht aber gerade in seiner 'Dummheit', wie La Rochefoucauld meint (sect. 50; VIII, 68 ff.).

Here we see Nietzsche starting from an idea of La Rochefoucauld and extending its implications to a new emphasis. Of pity, the latter had said:

Il y a souvent plus d'orgueil que de bonté à plaindre les malheurs de nos ennemis; c'est pour leur faire sentir que nous sommes au-dessus d'eux, que nous leur donnons des marques de compassion (463; cf. also 264, etc.).

Continually he exposes the possible motives of self-interest which lie behind compassion. Nietzsche follows the question in the other direction, into the psychology of the object of pity, and reaches a conclusion quite in harmony with La Rochefoucauld's. Both are concerned to tear away the veil of appearance, to lay bare the roots, however unpleasant they may be, of our most cherished illusions of nobility and selflessness. Throughout this book Nietzsche is obsessed with the divergence between reality and appearance, and in this he is following closely in the footsteps of his French master, who viewed the whole of society as an immense conspiracy of deception, and our own 'amour-propre' as the biggest flatterer of all.[1] Nietzsche goes so far as to say that:

Wenn Einer sehr lange und hartnäckig Etwas *scheinen* will, so wird es ihm zuletzt schwer, etwas Anderes zu *sein*. Der Beruf fast jedes Menschen, sogar der des Künstlers, beginnt mit Heuchelei, mit einem Nachmachen von Aussen her, mit einem Copiren des Wirkungsvollen (sect. 51; VIII, 71).

He follows this with an investigation of the real nature of 'unegoistic' actions, coming to this conclusion:

Sind diess Alles aber unegoistische Zustände? Sind diese Thaten der Moralität *Wunder*, weil sie nach dem Ausdruck Schopenhauers 'unmöglich und doch wirklich'

[1] Cf. *Maximes* 2, 3, 39, 115, etc.

sind? Ist es nicht deutlich, dass in all diesen Fällen der Mensch *Etwas von sich*, einen Gedanken, ein Verlangen, ein Erzeugniss mehr liebt, als *etwas Anderes von sich*, dass er also sein Wesen *zertheilt* und dem einen Theil den anderen zum Opfer bringt? . . . In der Moral behandelt sich der Mensch nicht als Individuum, sondern als dividuum (sect. 57; VIII, 75).

This reduction of moral actions to the victory of one part of our nature over another is exactly in line with La Rochefoucauld's investigation.[1] Nietzsche sums up his view thus:

Man wird selten irren, wenn man extreme Handlungen auf Eitelkeit, mittelmässige auf Gewöhnung und kleinliche auf Furcht zurückführt (sect. 74; VIII, 83).

He characterizes La Rochefoucauld's 'amour-propre':

Wie die Knochen Fleischstücke Eingeweide und Blutgefässe mit einer Haut umschlossen sind, die den Anblick des Menschen erträglicher macht, so werden die Regungen und Leidenschaften der Seele durch die Eitelkeit umhüllt: sie ist die Haut der Seele (sect. 82; VIII, 86),

and he continually exposes motives of self-interest in the giving of praise (sects. 86 f.; VIII, 87).[2] There is an acute remark on man in society:

Es ist häufig im Verkehre mit Menschen eine wohlwollende Verstellung nöthig, als ob wir die Motive ihres Handelns nicht durchschauten (sect. 293; VIII, 257),

which echoes La Rochefoucauld's:

Il est aussi facile de se tromper soi-même sans s'en apercevoir qu'il est difficile de tromper les autres sans qu'ils s'en aperçoivent (115).[3]

And later Nietzsche goes on:

Ob der Mensch seine schlechten Eigenschaften und Laster verbirgt oder mit Offenheit sie eingesteht, so wünscht doch in beiden Fällen seine Eitelkeit seinen Vortheil dabei zu haben; man beachte nur, wie fein er unterscheidet vor wem er jene Eigenschaften verbirgt, vor wem er ehrlich und offenherzig wird (sect. 313; VIII, 260 f.).

As La Rochefoucauld had said:

Il est difficile de démêler si un procédé net, sincère et honnête est un effet de probité ou d'habileté (170).

Nietzsche argues that a hypocrite will perhaps achieve momentary success but will always be finally detected:

Es ist Nichts, was die Menschen sich theurer bezahlen lassen, als Demüthigung . . . (and so) . . . es giebt im Verkehre mit Menschen keine grössere Thorheit als sich

[1] Cf. *Maximes* 195, 200, 481, etc.

[2] Cf. *Maximes* 144, 146, etc.

[3] Nietzsche's thought appears to be a direct development, not from La Rochefoucauld, but from Chamfort's: Quand on veut plaire dans le monde, il faut se résoudre à se laisser apprendre beaucoup de choses qu'on sait par des gens qui les ignorent (*Maximes et Pensées*, *Œuvres* II, 52).

den Ruf der Anmaassung zuzuziehen; es ist noch schlimmer, als wenn man nicht gelernt hat, höflich zu lügen (sect. 373; VIII, 279 f.).

As La Rochefoucauld says:

Nous gagnerions plus de nous laisser voir tels que nous sommes que d'essayer de paraître ce que nous ne sommes pas (457).

Nietzsche sees the value of introspection as limited by the very construction of our minds, which always dress up our feelings and motives as something else, in the service of that final 'amour-propre' which dominates each of us:

Der Mensch ist gegen sich selbst, gegen Auskundschaftung und Belagerung durch sich selber sehr gut vertheidigt, er vermag gewöhnlich nicht mehr von sich als seine Aussenwerke wahrzunehmen. Die eigentliche Festung ist ihm unzugänglich, selbst unsichtbar, es sei denn, dass Freunde und Feinde die Verräther machen und ihn selber auf geheimem Wege hineinführen (sect. 491; VIII, 348 f.).

This shows an appreciation of just that truth which is so present throughout La Rochefoucauld's work, and which he puts in so central a position:

Il est plus facile de connaître l'homme en général que de connaître un homme en particulier (436).

In this book Nietzsche carries out a careful investigation of the real basis of moral action, and especially of the fundamental play-acting which we carry out continually, dressing up our own selfishly-grounded impulses and motives with 'moral' and 'unegoistic' names in order to justify ourselves to our own consciences. He is here only following the French moralists and especially La Rochefoucauld. It is also significant that this is the first book which he casts in the form of cycles of aphorisms, abandoning the plan he had followed before of a connected line of argument, broken only for convenience into sections.[1] This aphorism-form is to be his main technical method from now on, though it undergoes considerable changes in his hands. It is predominantly La Rochefoucauld who has shown him the possibilities of the aphorism as a means of displaying truth in an arresting manner, and one may see the influence of the Frenchman in this direction as well as in the general guiding of Nietzsche's thought on to psychological problems. This opinion is further strengthened

[1] The explanation usually offered for Nietzsche's choice of the 'aphorism-style' is twofold: that his headaches allowed him to concentrate only for short periods, so that a long piece of connected writing was impossible, and that his habit was to compose his books while out walking, noting his thoughts and transcribing them later. Both these reasons are valid during the last part of his life, but very much less so in this comparative peace at the Villa Rubinacci. The aphorism style was adopted *before* these factors became operative.

by the fact that Nietzsche's aphorisms appear frequently to be conscious imitations of La Rochefoucauld's. He says:

> Die Antithese ist die enge Pforte, durch welche sich am liebsten der Irrthum zur Wahrheit schleicht (sect. 187; VIII, 171)

and:

> Die Meisten Denker schreiben schlecht, weil sie uns nicht nur ihren Gedanken, sondern auch das Denken der Gedanken mittheilen (sect. 188; VIII, 171).

In two ways, then, La Rochefoucauld is affecting Nietzsche's style. First, in the resolve to leave out the 'rough work', to present only the crystallization of thinking. We have only to think of the hours of toil which La Rochefoucauld spent in distilling an epigram of a dozen words from a whole page of writing,[1] to see that his technique is essentially the same. And secondly, the love of antithesis is fundamentally characteristic of La Rochefoucauld and more and more noticeable in Nietzsche. There are in this book countless examples of Nietzsche's use of methods which are at bottom the same as his master's:

> Man muss ein gutes Gedächtnis haben, um gegebene Versprechen halten zu können. . . . So eng ist die Moral an die Güte des Intellects gebunden (sect. 59; VIII, 75).
>
> Es giebt einen *Trotz gegen sich selbst*, zu dessen sublimirtesten Aeusserungen manche Formen der Askese gehören (sect. 137; VIII, 134).

This quality comes out particularly clearly in the series of epigrams at the beginning of the sixth *Hauptstück*. Perhaps the tendency to reduce the point to a play on words is plainest in this:

> Eine feine Seele bedrückt es, sich Jemanden zum Dank verpflichtet zu wissen; eine grobe, sich Jemandem (sect. 330; VIII, 254).[2]

Yet the two men have dissimilar minds. While in general La Rochefoucauld is seeking always to refine and distill, to sharpen a train of thought into a telling epigram which is a genuine crystallization of truth, Nietzsche feels the epigram form to be a shackle, a drag on his expression. This explains why his genuine epigrams are usually poor in quality, and also why he tends to expand them into essayettes. It is the opposite tendency to La Rochefoucauld's. The number of sections which can be called epigrammatic is relatively small. Nietzsche's favourite form is the short paragraph, from one to four

[1] Cf. the first version of *Maxime* 88 which extends to thirty lines. La Rochefoucauld pruned and chiselled in later editions until the final epigram of four lines was produced. The same process is apparent in *Maximes* 236, 65, etc.

[2] We can see the same tendency often in La Rochefoucauld: e.g. Nous pardonnons souvent à ceux qui nous ennuyent, mais nous ne pouvons pardonner à ceux que nous ennuyons (304).

or five pages, in which a salient thought is stated, investigated and summed up. The influence of La Rochefoucauld is apparently here again one which Nietzsche was unwilling to submit to, and he is not happy when writing pure epigrams.

4

The new direction in his thought at this time is broadly twofold. With the abandonment of all idealism and the assumption of the mask of the 'free spirit' goes a profound interest in human psychology, which is first apparent as a determination to isolate the essential deceit which is at the centre of the personality. Nietzsche's guides in these two directions, which co-exist in his thought, but which are not necessarily interdependent, are respectively Voltaire and La Rochefoucauld. These are by no means the only French writers whom he is reading assiduously and with benefit at this time, but they are perhaps the most powerful influences upon him. But just as he soon shed the mask of ultimate scepticism which he calls the 'free spirit', and returned to an attitude in which belief is fundamental, while retaining all the rest of his life his psychological distrust of human ideals and moral qualities, so he soon found Voltaire was not in reality the guide he needed, and while never abandoning him, nevertheless left him on one side, but remained a devoted reader and admirer of La Rochefoucauld's work.

Chapter 5

SCEPTICISM AND IRONY

1

MENSCHLICHES was received with extreme surprise and even consternation by almost all Nietzsche's friends. Yet he speaks of a new consciousness of the direction he must take and a new confidence in his own ideals.[1] He now admits openly that he has broken with Schopenhauer and Wagner. Rohde is disturbed by his apparent capitulation to Rée; Nietzsche strongly denies any indebtedness to him.[2] Despite the fact that only Rée and, surprisingly, Burckhardt were really pleased with the book, apart from Peter Gast, who transcribed it from his dictation, Nietzsche seems now to be happy and confident in a way which we have not seen before. The new ideal of the free spirit gives him abundant compensation for the increasingly lonely way he is treading. He was not depressed when the break with Wagner led to an open attack on him in the *Bayreuther Blätter* (autumn, 1878), indeed, he was already busy on another book in the same vein. This was dictated to Peter Gast in the winter of 1878, and couched, partly in consequence of the method of composition, in short aphorisms. These *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* appeared in March 1879. They appear to be a disjointed collection of epigrams, but are actually an expansion of the previous book, with the same nine sections, though no divisions between them are marked. A more aggressive tone is apparent in the discussion of Schopenhauer and Wagner,[3] though the first is recognized as one of the eight spiritual guides revered in the concluding 'Hadesfahrt' section (IX, 174 f.). Nietzsche is more directly preoccupied here with the problem of German culture, and his thinking culminates in the startling paradox: 'Gut deutsch sein heisst sich entdeutschen' (sect. 323; IX, 151). The book is full of brilliant aperçus, and a gradually crystallizing conception of health as the ultimate good, but otherwise marks no advance in Nietzsche's thought and is content to repeat, a little more laconically and aggressively, the ideas we have already noticed.

[1] Cf. for instance the letter to von Seydlitz, 13 May, 1878, emphasizing his need for solitude (*Ges. Br.* I, 422), and to Malwida, 3 September, 1877 (*Ges. Br.* III, 578).

[2] Rohde's letter, 16 June, 1878, and Nietzsche's reply, June 1878 (*Ges. Br.* II, 543, 549).

[3] Cf. sects. 32, 134, 159, 171, 271 (IX, 30, 71, 80, 89, 133).

As before, only Peter Gast and Rée and Burckhardt welcomed it. Nietzsche's physical condition was now so bad that he had to resign his professorship in May 1879. His state of mind can be gathered from his letters.[1] He was working at the highest pressure on his new book, *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, which appeared at Christmas. Again the whole is cast in the form of aphorisms, but a new consciousness of freedom is apparent. The last boat is now burnt—the obligations of his professorship—from now on he is free of all compulsion and can go his way unhindered by any loyalty except to his own thinking. Knowledge and life are now explicitly opposed and Nietzsche's allegiance is to life. In this way the dead end of the devotion to knowledge as an absolute is to be escaped and the positivism of the first part of *Menschliches* will eventually be overcome. Many of the ideas familiar to us are repeated. There is a detailed analysis of the concept of punishment, exposing its illogicality (sects. 23 ff.; IX, 188 ff.). There is the same criticism of Christianity (sect. 84; IX, 235 ff.). Literary questions occupy a large part of the work—all the 'classical' German writers are discussed and related to the general problem of German culture. Nietzsche also attacks political and social problems, discussing the machine age and the 'superficiality' of democratic thinking. The book opens and closes with a dialogue between the 'wanderer'—Nietzsche's symbol for the free, emancipated spirit, for himself—and his shadow, who incorporates the inevitable doubt which must be a part of the position he has taken up. This splitting of himself into two figures is the beginning in his work of the tendency which is to culminate in the symbolic figures of *Zarathustra*. It is apparent that the development of his thinking is beginning to take a new and more hopeful turn, which is not, however, fully clear until later books.

2

Voltaire and La Rochefoucauld, in uneasy combination, were strong influences on the first part of *Menschliches*, and this influence is still apparent. Indeed, the dedication of the first book to Voltaire is coupled with a compliment to him inserted in brackets at the end of section 407 (originally the last section) of *Vermischte Meinungen und*

[1] Cf. letters to his family, 12 April, July, and 31 December, 1879 (*Ges. Br.* V, 395, 410, 422). to Peter Gast, 11 September, 1879 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 17). To Malwida, in a most illuminating letter of 14 January, 1880, he says his life's work is done, the last three months were the worst in his life, he is very near death, the Wagners have abandoned him, but his devotion to Cosima is unimpaired (*Ges. Br.* III, 591).

Sprüche during its printing. But while correcting the proofs Nietzsche erased these words and substituted the famous 'Hadesfahrt' section (IX, 174 f.) which makes no mention of Voltaire.[1] But there is one significant aphorism at the beginning of the book:

Man kann den Unterschied der früheren und der gegenwärtigen Freigeisterei nicht besser verdeutlichen, als wenn man jenes Satzes gedenkt, den zu erkennen und auszusprechen die ganze Unerschrockenheit des vorigen Jahrhunderts nöthig war und der dennoch, von der jetzigen Einsicht aus bemessen, zu einer unfreiwilligen Naivetät herabsinkt — ich meine den Satz Voltaires: 'croyez-moi, mon ami, l'erreur aussi a son mérite' (sect. 4; IX, 15 f.).

After the publication of the book Nietzsche received a bust of Voltaire from Paris with no covering letter except a slip of paper bearing the words: 'L'âme de Voltaire fait ses compliments à Frédéric Nietzsche'. It was never discovered who had sent it, though Nietzsche's correspondence contains speculations on the point.[2]

Der Wanderer und sein Schatten (1879) contains several explicit references to Voltaire. Nietzsche quotes the latter's revenge on Frederick the Great (sect. 237; IX, 308) and mentions with approbation the 'nil admirari' which Voltaire adopted as a motto from Bolingbroke (sect. 313; IX, 342). But we have already seen that though the spirit of these three books is positivistic in the Voltairean manner, Nietzsche is also attracted by that other side of conscious artistry in Voltaire, which he sees as the domination of life by form, the opposite of Rousseau's immediate acceptance of it—and this quality is becoming more and more important for him. In the *Wanderer* there are sections which spring from exactly this conception:

In Ketten tanzen — Bei jedem einzelnen griechischen Dichter und Schriftsteller ist zu fragen: welches ist der *neue Zwang*, den er sich auferlegt und den er seinen Zeitgenossen reizvoll macht. . . . 'In Ketten tanzen', es sich schwer machen, und dann die Täuschung der Leichtigkeit darüber breiten — das ist das Kunststück, welches sie uns zeigen wollen . . . (sect. 140; IX, 258 f.).

There is here no mention of Voltaire, but there can be no doubt that Nietzsche has in mind those very qualities of classical art which he admired so intensely in the Frenchman, and which we have already seen him arguing at great length.[3] And again the Greeks are the starting-point.

[1] The section is quoted in the introduction, p. x above. The change is significant, and shows Nietzsche's instinct to be sound. His affinity with the 'four pairs' mentioned is much more profound than his adoration of Voltaire ever was.

[2] Cf. *Ges. Br.* III, 585; IV, 7.

[3] Cf. the quotation on p. 41 above.

3

It is apparent that La Rochefoucauld has not lost his hold over Nietzsche. In *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* there are a number of aphorisms which appear to have been born out of the discussion of the *maxime* as a form, a work of art:

> Eine gute Sentenz ist zu hart für den Zahn der Zeit und wird von allen Jahrtausenden nicht aufgezehrt, obwohl sie jeder Zeit zur Nahrung dient: dadurch ist sie das grosse Paradoxon in der Literatur, das Unvergängliche inmitten des Wechselnden, die Speise, welche immer geschätzt bleibt, wie das Salz, und niemals, wie selbst dieses, dumm wird (sect. 168; IX, 81; cf. also sect. 127; IX, 68).

There are many similar sentences to this, where one feels that Nietzsche is defending the aphorism as a form, not only to others who may have questioned it, but also to himself. He does not, in fact, feel at home in it, and has to convince himself that it, too, produces 'truth'. That this should be so marked in the book, which is the most 'aphoristic' of all his works, shows once again how much he is resisting La Rochefoucauld's influence in this direction. But we can see him following the latter's thought in such passages as this:

> Man nennt diese Motive (personal advantage, fear, etc.) unedel und selbstisch: gut, aber wenn sie uns zu einer Tugend, zum Beispiel Entsagung, Pflichttreue, Ordnung, Sparsamkeit, Maass und Mitte anreizen, so höre man ja auf sie, wie auch ihre Beiworte lauten mögen (sect. 91; IX, 48),

which recalls La Rochefoucauld's views on the interdependence of vice and virtue, expressed in such *maximes* as:

> L'intérêt, qu'on accuse de tous nos crimes, mérite souvent d'être loué de nos bonnes actions (305; cf. also 380, etc.).

Such *maximes* as this reveal the deepest conviction of the Frenchman, that human nature is an ugly unfathomable mystery, that human beings are organisms seeking always to assert themselves and driven by 'amour-propre' to impose themselves on their environment. The intellect can penetrate the disguises of egoism and in some degree counterbalance the pull of passion, but there is always that final contradiction between life and thought, that final quality in life which lies beyond the purview of our analysing minds. That the mind is continually seeking to pin down and contemplate that quality in life which is non-intellectual, which is the play of passion in and around and between us, that this quest is finally vain, because our judgment is appropriate to the categories of thinking, but life obeys different rules—this is La Rochefoucauld's deepest conviction,

and it is in the intense experience of this final illogicality and mystery in life that his genius lies. Nietzsche at this time (1879) is making full use of his psychological acumen, that is the negative, rather cynical and embittered side of him, but there are hints that he is penetrating further into the Frenchman's mind, and we shall see that later on his positive thought is definitely coloured by this.

There are in this book a number of aphorisms about vanity, of which these are typical:

Wer einem Anderen in der Gesellschaft Gelegenheiten macht, sein Wissen Fühlen Erfahren glücklich darzulegen, stellt sich über ihn und begeht also, falls er nicht als Höherstehender von Jenem ohne Einschränkung empfunden wird, ein Attentat auf dessen Eitelkeit — während er gerade derselben Befriedigung zu geben glaubt (sect. 234; IX, 124).

Mancher misshandelt aus Eitelkeit selbst seine Freunde, wenn Zeugen zugegen sind, denen er sein Uebergewicht deutlich machen will: und Andere übertreiben den Werth ihrer Feinde, um mit Stolz darauf hinzuweisen, dass sie solcher Feinde werth sind (sect. 263; IX, 131).

These show Nietzsche preoccupied with the problem raised by La Rochefoucauld: what rôle does our self-esteem play in our most noble actions? At this point in his development his answer takes the form of a destruction of the moral conceptions by the revelation of their basis in egoism. We may be sure he has read and taken to heart La Rochefoucauld's many *maximes* on 'amour-propre'—'Le plus grand de tous les flatteurs'(2)—and has studied the long characterization of it which was suppressed from the *Maximes*. And the deeper psychological awareness and determination to penetrate beyond appearances results in such judgments as these:

Das peinlichste Gefühl, das es giebt, ist zu entdecken, dass man immer für etwas Höheres genommen wird, als man ist. Denn man muss sich dabei eingestehen: irgend Etwas an dir ist Lug und Trug, dein Wort, dein Ausdruck, deine Gebärde, dein Auge, deine Handlung — und dieses trügerische Etwas ist so nothwendig wie deine sonstige Ehrlichkeit, hebt aber deren Wirkung und Werth fortwährend auf (sect. 344; IX, 159).

Du hast ihm eine Gelegenheit gegeben, Grösse des Charakters zu zeigen, und er hat sie nicht benutzt. Das wird er dir nie verzeihen (sect. 384; IX, 169).

These are entirely in the vein of La Rochefoucauld. And finally we have an exaggerated application of his method in:

In der vergoldeten Scheide des Mitleidens steckt mitunter der Dolch des Neides (sect. 377; IX, 167).

This is essentially akin to La Rochefoucauld's view of pity, though he would not have used such a remote and fanciful image to portray it.

In the conversation which opens the *Wanderer* it is apparent that Nietzsche is still occupied with the same problem:

DER WANDERER: Ich dachte, der menschliche Schatten sei seine Eitelkeit; diese aber würde nie fragen: 'soll ich denn schmeicheln?'

DER SCHATTEN: Die menschliche Eitelkeit, soweit ich sie kenne, fragt auch nicht an, wie ich schon zweimal that, ob sie reden dürfe: sie redet immer (IX, 179).

And Nietzsche develops this view of society:

So wird jene Grundüberzeugung, dass wir auf den Wellen der Gesellschaft viel mehr durch Das, was wir *gelten*, als durch das, was wir *sind*, gutes Fahrwasser haben oder Schiffbruch leiden — eine Ueberzeugung, die für alles Handeln in Bezug auf die Gesellschaft das Steuerruder sein muss (sect. 60; IX, 223 f.).

He describes the powerful individual expressing his strength by asserting himself against others, and goes on:

Er merkt zeitig, dass nicht Das, was er *ist*, sondern Das, was er *gilt*, ihn trägt oder niederwirft: hier ist der Ursprung der *Eitelkeit*. Der Mächtige sucht mit allen Mitteln Vermehrung des *Glaubens* an seine Macht. . . . Wir kennen die Eitelkeit nur in den abgeschwächtesten Formen, in ihren Sublimirungen und kleinen Dosen, weil wir in einem späten und sehr gemilderten Zustande der Gesellschaft leben; ursprünglich ist sie *die grosse Nützlichkeit*, das stärkste Mittel der Erhaltung (sect. 181; IX, 277).

These views are built round the fundamental fact that in society appearances are determinative, not real character, which is an important part of La Rochefoucauld's thought.[1] But Nietzsche has taken a step beyond his master in elaborating the theory of power to explain the strength and ubiquity of egoism. La Rochefoucauld isolates the quality, but does not consider its real basis in the desire of the individual for power, nor does he, as Nietzsche does, show how it was originally essentially a *useful quality*. It seems true to say that La Rochefoucauld has led Nietzsche to consider these things, but Nietzsche has taken up the Frenchman's view within his own theory and has to a certain extent limited it but also given it greater precision and weight by relating it to the theory of the struggle for power. *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* is largely devoted to the study of the rôle of advantage in moral action, which is, of course, only another aspect of the same problem.

Es gäbe keine Casuistik der Moral, wenn es keine Casuistik des Vortheils gäbe . . . (sect. 35; IX, 212).

Ohne Eitelkeit und Selbstsucht — was sind denn die menschlichen Tugenden? (sect. 285; IX, 330).

[1] Cf. *Maximes* 212, 166, 64, etc.

Finally, in a sketch from this time:

> Man lobt das Unegoistische ursprünglich, weil es nützlich, das Egoistische tadelt man, weil es schädlich ist. Wie aber wenn diess ein *Irrthum* wäre? Wenn das Egoistische in viel höherem Grade nützlich wäre, auch den anderen Menschen, als das Unegoistische! Wie wenn man beim Egoistischen immer nur an den *dummen* Egoismus gedacht hätte! Im Grunde lobte man die Klugheit? — Freilich Güte und Dummheit gehen auch zusammen, un bon homme usw . . . (*Nachlass* IX, 383 f.).

4

During this central 'positivistic' period of Nietzsche's development, the influence of Pascal upon him runs on similar lines to that of La Rochefoucauld. Nietzsche is reading Pascal predominantly as a critic of human illusion and human pride, and we find echoes of the Frenchman fairly frequently in these three books. *Menschliches* includes a detailed analysis of the rôle played by custom in our thinking and belief which is substantially the same as Pascal's. One section, for instance, which begins:

> Eine wichtige Gattung der Lust und damit der Quelle der Moralität entsteht aus der Gewohnheit . . . (sect. 97; IX, 94)

shows how closely Nietzsche is following Pascal's thought.[1] The latter's view that custom is a 'second nature' which destroys the first (which may itself be only a custom) is far more radical than Montaigne's very lively appreciation of the rôle of convention in human society. Nietzsche deplores the effect of custom in narrowing and weakening the individual life, but it is Pascal's insistence that this too should be used to promote right belief (by the 'machine') which determines him in his investigation not only of the effect of belief on action but also of action on belief. This view, that it is as true to say that what I am springs from what I do, as the reverse, is an essential part of all Nietzsche's moral thinking, and it is strongly expressed by Pascal.[2] Nietzsche carefully analyses the rôle of the 'machine' in promoting strength of character (sect. 228; VIII, 204), taking up a position based largely on his analysis of Pascal and on his view of the determinative effects of custom:

> Alle Staaten und Ordnungen der Gesellschaft: die Stände, die Ehe, die Erziehung, das Recht, alles diess hat seine Kraft und Dauer allein in dem Glauben der gebundenen Geister an sie (sect. 227; VIII, 203).

[1] Cf. the many Pensées on custom and nature (e.g. 93, 89, etc.). La coutume fait toute l'équité, par cette seule raison qu'elle est reçue; c'est le fondement mystique de son autorité (294). This idea occurs almost in the same words in Montaigne (III, 13, p. 577).

[2] Cf. *Pensées* 240, 252, etc.

In this sentence there seems also to be an echo of Pascal's view of the necessary 'common error' which binds society together.[1] And this conception is to prove very fruitful indeed in Nietzsche's later thought.

There are several references to Pascal in *Menschliches*. Nietzsche says that if Christianity were true:

> . . . es wäre unsinnig, den ewigen Vortheil gegen die zeitliche Bequemlichkeit so aus dem Auge zu lassen (sect. 116; VIII, 121),

which seems to be a summary of the 'pari', and is interesting as being in some degree a contradiction of his later rejection of that argument on Voltaire's grounds (that to prove a belief *necessary* is irrelevant to the question of its *truth*). Again, speaking of modern times, he says that we have few great moralists, now that Pascal, Epictetus, Seneca and Plutarch are very little read (sect. 282; VIII, 245 f.).[2] And in *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* Nietzsche quotes Pascal:

> Das Greisenhafteste, was je über den Menschen gedacht worden ist, steckt in dem berühmten Satze 'das Ich ist immer hassenswerth'; das Kindlichste in dem noch berühmteren 'liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst'. — Bei dem einen hat die Menschenkenntnis aufgehört, bei dem andern noch gar nicht angefangen (sect. 385; IX, 169),

where we see him feeling his way towards an answer to Pascal's condemnation. And it is, of course, in this book that Nietzsche describes his 'Hadesfahrt' where he has met and conversed with eight of the dead—Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer.[3]

There is a curiously superficial summing-up of the Christian technique of apologetic derived from Pascal in these lines:

> Pilatus, mit seiner Frage: was ist Wahrheit? wird jetzt gern als Advocat Christi eingeführt, um alles Erkannte und Erkennbare als Schein zu verdächtigen und auf dem schauerlichen Hintergrunde des Nichts-wissen-könnens das Kreuz aufzurichten (sect. 8; IX, 17).

It is plain that Nietzsche is not yet taking Pascal seriously as an exponent of Christianity, or indeed as a profound analyst of the nature of man, though, as we have seen, he is glad to draw inspiration from him in his criticism of human society and human psychology.

[1] Cf. *Pensées* 18.

[2] That Pascal, a modern man, should be mentioned in the same breath as these Ancients is a small indication of the dominant position he is coming to hold in Nietzsche's thinking.

[3] The passage is quoted in full (introduction, p. x above). It is of cardinal importance, since it is a considered list of the four pairs of guides he is conscious of following.

We have noticed, for instance, his view that the concept of justice originated in the play of equally-matched forces:

Gleichgewicht ist also ein sehr wichtiger Begriff für die älteste Rechts- und Morallehre; Gleichgewicht ist die Basis der *Gerechtigkeit* (*Wanderer*, sect. 22; IX, 199).

And the following section argues the point at length. We are reminded of Pascal's description of 'human' justice:

. . . mais, ne pouvant faire qu'il soit forcé d'obéir à la justice, on a fait qu'il soit juste d'obéir à la force; ne pouvant fortifier la justice, on a justifié la force, afin que la justice et la force fussent ensemble, et que la paix fût, qui est le souverain bien (299).

We shall meet this discussion of the metaphysical basis of justice repeatedly in Nietzsche's thought, and always he is indebted to Pascal in his treatment of it. The elaboration of the double system of morality, for 'lords' and 'slaves', is based on the supposition that power is the source of political and moral concepts, and in this the tragically clear-sighted Pascal is his main guide.

5

Here Pascal is most productive in his development, but in general during this period Pascal's influence runs parallel to La Rochefoucauld's, and is mainly critical and destructive. In so far as Nietzsche is positive at this time, he is following Montaigne rather than the seventeenth-century writers, and all these three books are rich in echoes of Montaigne. There is something of the spirit of the *Essais*, for instance, in this passage from *Menschliches*:

Es sieht aus, als ob alles chaotisch würde, das Alte verloren gienge, das Neue nichts tauge und immer schwächlicher werde. . . . Wir schwanken, aber es ist nöthig dadurch nicht ängstlich zu werden und das Neu-Errungene etwa preiszugeben. Überdiess *können* wir in's Alte nicht zurück, wir *haben* die Schiffe verbrannt; es bleibt nur übrig, tapfer zu sein, mag nun dabei diess oder jenes herauskommen — *Schreiten* wir *zu*, kommen wir nur von der Stelle (sect. 248; VIII, 219 f.).

Eins muss man haben, entweder einen von Natur leichten Sinn oder einen durch Kunst und Wissen *erleichterten Sinn* (sect. 486; VIII, 347).

Montaigne had developed the idea that our culture, in so far as it consisted of learning out of books, was useless unless it brought us to a stage akin to that of the unenlightened:

Ou il faut un homme tres-fidelle, ou si simple qu'il n'ait pas dequoy bastir et donner de la vraysemblance à des inventions fausses; et qui n'ait rien espousé (I, 31, p. 394).

Here, too, the 'truth to oneself' which was so central to Nietzsche's earlier mysticism has become a much more positive exhortation to form oneself and to follow the inner law of one's own nature:

. . . jeder hat *angeborenes Talent*, aber nur Wenigen ist der Grad von Zähigkeit Ausdauer Energie angeboren und anerzogen, so dass er wirklich ein Talent wird, also *wird*, was er *ist*, das heisst: es in Werken und Handlungen entladet (sect. 263; VIII, 233).

And sections 61 and 267 of the *Wanderer* (IX, 224, 317) develop the idea that there can really be no such thing as education in the sense of forming the personality, since there is in each of us a spark which is purely personal and which forms us according to its own laws, a 'piece of fate' which is untouchable and inexplicable. Montaigne had this view:

Les inclinations naturelles s'aident et fortifient par institution; mais elles ne se changent guiere et surmontent (III, 2, p. 51).

And the *Essais* are built on the conviction that the individual has a duty to himself which overrides all others, and that the personality is essentially unique and autonomous, defying all efforts to codify and regulate its motives.

Wie du auch bist (writes Nietzsche in *Menschliches*), so diene dir selber als Quell der Erfahrung! (sect. 292; VIII, 251).

This might almost be the epigraph of the *Essais*, so close is it to Montaigne's conclusions. But we have seen how Nietzsche found the method of introspection exposed to insuperable difficulties, whether used to attain the truth or to form the personality.[1] He criticizes introspection as a method on the ground that the mind in the last instance cannot know itself, cannot be both witness, judge and jury in its own case, and his criticism owes a great deal to arguments Schopenhauer had adduced on this point. In Nietzsche this will later develop into a detailed investigation of the function of the intellect. All this stands apparently in contrast to Montaigne's view, but it is the intellectual, logical quality of the mind which Nietzsche is criticizing, and here he is with his master. His strongest conviction is that the personality is impossible of apprehension in intellectual terms, lies beyond the grasp of the intellect. This is the conviction which lies at the root of Montaigne's attitude. As Nietzsche says:

Man ist Besitzer seiner Meinungen, wie man Besitzer von Fischen ist — insofern man nämlich Besitzer eines Fischteichs ist. Man muss fischen gehen und Glück haben — dann hat man *seine* Fische, *seine* Meinungen. Ich rede hier von lebendigen

[1] Cf. the passage quoted on p. 47 above.

Meinungen, von lebendigen Fischen. Andere sind zufrieden, wenn sie ein Fossillen-Cabinet besitzen — und, in ihrem Kopfe, 'Ueberzeugungen' (sect. 317; IX, 343).

This exhortation to subjectivity is coupled with the recognition that thinking cannot and should not be purely logical, that a thought should bear the stamp of the whole personality of the thinker, that only in so far as it is personal is it true.

We have noticed Nietzsche's awareness in these books of the influence of custom on our living and thinking:

Alles Gewohnte zieht ein immer fester werdendes Netz von Spinneweben um uns zusammen (*Menschliches*, sect. 427; VIII, 303),

which has affinities with both Pascal and Montaigne, who says:

Ou que je vueille donner, il me faut forcer quelque barrière de la coustume, tant elle a soigneusement bridé toutes nos avenues (I, 36, p. 433).

Montaigne sees this binding constraint of public custom and private habit as a thing at all costs to be overcome; Pascal sees it as a mark of the quality of the human animal, but as something which can and should be used to promote right belief by action; Nietzsche as yet hardly analyses it seriously, but we shall see later that he combines these two attitudes, and also extends Pascal's, making a careful investigation of the effect of action on belief, finally reaching the view that the justification for right belief is only to be found in its consequences in right action.

Throughout his work at this time runs an emphasis on living rather than thinking, an exhortation to renounce the quest of illusory final ends and justifications and concentrate on the business of forming one's own character and life. Yet there is already in Nietzsche something more:

Alles ist im Flusse, es ist wahr — aber *Alles ist auch im Strome*: nach Einem Ziele hin (*Menschliches*, sect. 107; VIII, 106).

What that end is we shall not see till much later, when he has passed through the present critical period and come to the recognition that all men are 'fragments of the future', that human progress is a reality, though not in the way the nineteenth century in general understood the term. We must wait until his studies in biology are complete, and he has begun to see the shadow of the Superman across the world, before we can truly appraise his development of Montaigne.

During this period he begins to work out in detail the relation between thinking and living, between the metaphysical and the ethical impulses in man. Truth, he feels, is not a Cartesian 'simple

idea', nor a 'correspondence with the object', but something about which there may be belief or knowledge; and in living it is belief not knowledge which affects our actions:

> Wahrscheinlichkeit, aber keine Wahrheit: Freischeinlichkeit, aber keine Freiheit — diese beiden Früchte sind es, derentwegen der Baum der Erkenntniss nicht mit dem Baum des Lebens verwechselt werden kann (*Wanderer*, sect. 1; IX, 182).
>
> Sie allesamt sind darauf aus, uns zu einer Entscheidung auf Gebieten zu drängen, wo weder Glauben noch Wissen noth thut; . . . Wir müssen wieder *gute Nachbarn der nächsten Dinge* werden und nicht so verächtlich wie bisher über sie hinweg nach Wolken und Nachtunholden hinblicken (ibid. sect. 16; IX, 193 f.).

This eminently Goethean wisdom is exactly the attitude reached by Montaigne, after the doubts and uncertainties of the *Apologie*, in the third book of the *Essais*.

Nietzsche's references to Montaigne at this time show what it is that attracts him. He sees him as the master of Shakespeare (*Menschliches*, sect. 176; VIII, 168), and, with Horace, as a pointer to the understanding of Socrates (*Wanderer*, sect. 86; IX, 237). In the 'Hadesfahrt' (IX, 174 f.) he links him with Epicurus, and in the *Wanderer* with La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Fontenelle, Vauvenargues and Chamfort, saying that these six come nearer the ancients than any other similar group of writers. He emphasizes the clarity and cheerfulness of the French authors, and says that the Greeks would have loved their wit (sect. 214; IX, 295 f.).[1] The influence of these writers on Nietzsche was not confined to his thought. From now on he will attempt to make his style witty and brilliant as well as clear and forceful. For this we have to thank his cultivation of French literature, while noting that in this as in so much else he is conscious that the qualities of the French are essentially those he feels would have appealed to the Greeks.

6

The four other writers mentioned here are also among his favourites, and in some cases traces of the effect of his reading of them can already be found. This is the only occasion in all his work on which he mentions La Bruyère, and though we may conclude that he reads him with delight,[2] there is no evidence that he was influenced by him. And this is the first time he mentions Fontenelle. Here he explicitly refers to the *Dialogue des morts*, and we may conclude that he is

[1] This passage was quoted in full, p. x above.
[2] But he does not figure in Nietzsche's library.

familiar with this book at least.[1] But it is only later that signs of the effect of his reading are apparent. This is also the first mention of Chamfort in his works. Nietzsche is reading him already,[2] but signs of his influence are not yet plain.

Vauvenargues is an old friend. In the very early notes on Democritus (1867), Nietzsche had transcribed his 'Les grandes pensées viennent du coeur' with approbation (II, 135), and he spoke with admiration of him to Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg in 1876.[3] His sister also reports that he knew Vauvenargues well.[4] Certainly Nietzsche was reading him with delight, and many of his ideas found an echo in his heart.[5] The disillusioned scepticism with which Vauvenargues contemplates the human individual,[6] the emphasis he places on the rôle of force in human society,[7] his view that naturally all is dependence and subordination, and not equality and partnership,[8] his conviction that all peace is a continuation or a preparation of war, and war right and natural,[9] that vices and virtues are inextricably bound up together, so that they cannot be disentangled,[10] and his emphasis on the rôle of custom in living[11]—all these ideas are, as we have seen, at the centre of Nietzsche's thought at this time, and the reading of Vauvenargues may well have reinforced in him the lessons he learned from earlier French moralists. Beyond this one can hardly go—it would be a mistake to assert that Vauvenargues exerted any determinative influence of him. Rather he confirmed and reinforced the influence of earlier and more profound writers, especially of La Rochefoucauld and Pascal.

[1] His library contained both this book and the *Histoire des oracles*.

[2] His library contained the *Pensées*.

[3] Cf. her account quoted on p. 37 above.

[4] Förster-Nietzsche, II, 272 f

[5] His library contained *Œuvres choisies*.

[6] L'art de plaire est l'art de tromper (*Réflexions et Maximes* 329, *Œuvres* I, 422) (quoted from the 1857 edition). Tous les hommes naissent sincères et meurent trompeurs (ibid., 521, *Œuvres* I, 448).

Cf. also *Maximes* 106, 172, 356 (*Œuvres* I, 384, 391, 427), etc.

[7] Cf. *Maximes* 187 (*Œuvres* I, 393).

[8] Il est faux que l'égalité soit une loi de la nature: la nature n'a rien fait d'égal; sa loi souveraine est la subordination et la dépendence (ibid., 227, *Œuvres* I, 401).

[9] Cf. *Maximes* 413 (*Œuvres* I, 441).

[10] Ce n'est pas toujours par faiblesse que les hommes ne sont ni tout à fait bons, ni tout à fait méchants; c'est parce qu'ils ont des vertus mêlées de vices. Leurs passions contraires se croisent, et ils sont entraînés tour à tour par leurs bonnes et par leurs mauvaises qualités . . . (ibid., 589, *Œuvres* I, 456; cf. also *Introduction à la Connaissance de l'Esprit Humain* 44, *Œuvres* I, 58).

[11] Les soldats marchent à l'ennemi, comme les capucins vont à matines. Ce n'est ni l'intérêt de la guerre, ni l'amour de la gloire ou de la patrie, qui animent aujourd'hui nos armées: c'est le tambour qui les mène et les ramène, comme le cloche fait lever et coucher les moines. On se fait encore religieux par dévotion, et soldat par libertinage; mais, dans la suite, on ne pratique guère ses devoirs que par nécessité ou par habitude (*Réflexions et Maximes* 696, *Œuvres* I, 471).

These are the six Frenchmen whom Nietzsche explicitly mentions as the finest, and we have seen that, apart from them, Montaigne and Pascal and Voltaire are all playing a part in the new orientation which his thought is undergoing. Others are mentioned in the works of this time. Isabella von Ungern-Sternberg reports that Condorcet was among his favourites, but there is no mention of him and no reason for assuming that he exercised any influence.[1] Diderot was one of the authors studied at the Villa Rubinacci, and in a long discussion of Sterne in *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* Nietzsche considers *Jacques le Fataliste*, wondering whether after all it was not meant to be an enigma (sect. 113; IX, 61); but though Nietzsche is plainly reading him,[2] there is no sign of any influence. Calvin is mentioned in passing,[3] as are Moliere[4] and Racine.[5] And there are eminently Racinian thoughts in these books, such as this:

> Jede grosse Liebe bringt den grausamen Gedanken mit sich, den Gegenstand der Liebe zu tödten, damit er ein für alle Mal dem frevelhaften Spiele des Wechsels entrückt sei: denn vor dem Wechsel graut die Liebe mehr als vor der Vernichtung (*Vermischte Meinungen*, sect. 280; IX, 136).

And there is an interesting analysis of mercy in this book (sect. 34; IX, 211 f.) which Faguet thinks is inspired by the last act of Corneille's *Cinna*.[6]

7

There is one more writer whom he still cultivated, despite the fact that his spirit is strongly antipathetic to the new direction which Nietzsche's thought has taken—Rousseau. Naturally he is now usually referred to with thinly-veiled hostility. In *Menschliches*, for instance, Nietzsche speaks of political or social fanatics who believe that by destroying all order they are preparing for a spontaneous growth of new and better forms. This is a dangerous dream, he thinks, resulting from Rousseau's belief in the innate goodness of 'natural' man:

> Leider weiss man aus historischen Erfahrungen, dass jeder solche Umsturz die wildesten Energien als die längst begrabenen Furchtbarkeiten und Maasslosigkeiten

[1] He does not figure in Nietzsche's library.
[2] His library contained a volume of the *Theater* in German.
[3] *Menschliches* (VIII, 98).
[4] *Wanderer*, sects. 63 and 230 (IX, 225, 386). Nietzsche's library contained *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Les Femmes Savantes*, *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Georges Dandin*.
[5] *Vermischte Meinungen und Spruche*, sects. 171 and 173 (IX, 87, 90). Nietzsche's library included a volume containing *Esther*, *Athalie*, *Andromaque*, and *Bajazet*.
[6] Faguet: *En lisant Nietzsche*, 1904, p. 315 ff. Nietzsche's library contained *Horace*, *Le Cid*, *Polyeucte* and *Rodogune*.

fernster Zeitalter von Neuem zur Auferstehung bringt: dass also ein Umsturz wohl eine Kraftquelle in einer matt gewordenen Menschheit sein kann, nimmermehr aber ein Ordner, Baumeister, Künstler, Vollender der menschlichen Natur (sect. 463; VIII, 326),

and he goes on to bemoan the fact that it was Rousseau and not Voltaire who was triumphant at the end of the eighteenth century. Nietzsche is here bitterly opposed to the former. The intellectual 'theoretical' man, whom he had so much despised at the beginning of his life, is now uppermost in him, and the thinking of Rousseau, with its continual appeal to values which are not finally intellectual, is intensely antipathetic to him. And also he sees incorporated in Rousseau a dangerous principle of 'nature' in the sense of unformed nature, a dangerous disregard of the strict formal approach to living which he admired so much in Voltaire. The latter impresses him most as one who orders and organizes life into an artistic pattern, the last expression of the classical method of dominating life by imposing form upon it. And Rousseau is the opposite extreme—the wish to experience life in the raw, to yield the personality entirely to 'truth', which Nietzsche now feels to be a denial of the ultimate human task. To all this is, of course, added his hatred of the Revolution, because of its effects—the emergence of the 'canaille', the doctrine of equality, the levelling down of distinctions. In so far as Rousseau is behind this, to Nietzsche, appalling tragedy, he is an object of hatred.[1] But notice that even in this description of the Frenchman he does admit that he may be a source of power to weakened humanity—that is to say just what he had sought in vain in the *Unzeitgemässen*, and just what in later works he was to proclaim so feelingly. There is an element in Rousseau which even now Nietzsche recognizes as a bond of kinship with himself—the element of power, the power of the personality to form itself, to express itself, to dominate. He recognizes this quality in such a passage as this:

Menschen wie Rousseau verstehen es, ihre Schwächen Lücken Laster gleichsam als Dünger ihres Talentes zu benutzen. Wenn Jener die Verdorbenheit und Entartung der Gesellschaft als leidige Folge der Cultur beklagt, so liegt hier eine persönliche Erfahrung zu Grunde; deren Bitterkeit giebt ihm die Schärfe seiner allgemeinen Verurtheilung und vergiftet die Pfeile, mit denen er schiesst; er entlastet sich zunächst als Individuum und denkt ein Heilmittel zu suchen, das direkt die Gesellschaft, aber indirekt und vermittelst jener, auch ihm zu Nutze ist (*Menschliches*, sect. 617; VIII, 381).

[1] Nietzsche sees Rousseau always as the real cause of the Revolution, and this he never forgives. Here he is unjust. It is truer to say that Voltaire was the determinative force in the creation of the revolutionary atmosphere than that Rousseau was.

And Rousseau has his place as one of the eight thinkers in the 'Hadesfahrt' (*Vermischte Meinungen*, sect. 408; IX, 174). The importance of this can hardly be overestimated. In the middle of his 'positivistic' period, when Rousseau and all that he stood for was the object of Nietzsche's scorn and hatred, when he had dedicated a book to Voltaire, and when his writing was entirely in the spirit of Voltaire, whom he always thinks of as the direct opposite of Rousseau—in the middle of this period, summing up the men who have influenced him, he omits Voltaire and includes Rousseau. Could anything show more forcefully the profound sense of obligation he felt towards him?

In the *Wanderer* Nietzsche's political views, particularly his theory of the origin of the idea of justice, are diametrically opposed to Rousseau's.[1] But that the importance of the latter for him lies elsewhere is clearly shown, for instance, in a long description of 'German virtue' which occurs in this book, where he describes the moral awakening which has recently run through Europe, and ascribes it to Rousseau on the one hand, and the resurrection of Roman Stoic feeling on the other. Kant, Schiller, Beethoven—all these betray a moral tone which is the legacy of Rousseau (sect. 216; IX, 299 ff.). And he concludes the paragraph by saying that all this awakening of moral virtue has had only unfortunate results in moral philosophy, and that Kant's moral theory and all its successors are simply a concerted attack on Helvétius, 'the most maligned of all good moralists and good men'. Nietzsche's treatment of Rousseau here, as so often, shows that combination of personal dislike with admiration of his power and significance which in general characterizes his attitude. Rousseau is becoming more and more a scapegoat for all his hatred of the Revolution and its consequences:

> Alles das Halbverrückte und namentlich Sentimentale und Sich-selbst-Berauschende, was zusammen die eigentliche *revolutionäre Substanz* und in Rousseau, vor der Revolution, Fleisch und Geist geworden war — dieses ganze Wesen setzte sich mit perfider Begeisterung noch *die Aufklärung* auf das fanatische Haupt (sect. 221; IX, 302 f.).

So that the Aufklärung, which incorporated all that seemed at this time fine and noble in man, was ruined and distorted by Rousseau, as Pascal was ruined and distorted by Christianity. Nietzsche's attitude to Rousseau is indeed very like his attitude to Christianity—he feels he is confronted with something which repels him and a little frightens him, something too big to be dismissed, which

[1] Cf. for instance sects. 22, 31 (IX, 198, 207).

fascinates him in spite of himself, and which is finally unsurmountable because it responds to a deep-seated quality in himself. In the *Wanderer* he tilts at Rousseau without seriously challenging him. He compares the desire to 'return to nature', which he interprets as a return to primitive existence, to the Christian emphasis on 'becoming as a little child' in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven (sect. 265; IX, 316). Both, he thinks, are simply flights from reality, both intrinsically sentimental. He somewhat superficially makes a point about 'nature' which Rousseau was well aware of:

> Wir sprechen von Natur und vergessen uns dabei: wir selber sind Natur quand même —. Folglich ist Natur etwas ganz Anderes als Das, was wir beim Nennen ihres Namens empfinden (sect. 327; IX, 347).

But Rousseau is much too big for any of these attacks to touch him, and Nietzsche knows this.

8

These three books, which Nietzsche afterwards combined into the two parts of *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*, are essentially negative in the sense that they clear the ground: they attempt nothing beyond the destruction of illusions and the analysis of errors. While it should be emphasized that the middle period is to a very large extent a direct reaction against the earlier works, in which Nietzsche expressly contradicts much of what he held before, it should not be overlooked that many of the ideas which now come to the forefront of his mind are the same as had inspired him earlier, or at least plain developments of them. The early cult of the 'genius', for instance, is now transformed into the cult of the 'free spirit', and though Socrates was ranged against the first and is now seen as the supreme example of the second, this should not blind us to their kinship. Similarly, the early idea that culture cannot subsist without an élite of superior men and a large body of ordinary inferior beings, is developed farther now and linked to the genealogy of morals. In many ways the new attitude is a hideous travesty of the old. Ideas which had been carried on the strong web of a heroic and exalted, if somewhat mystical, aestheticism, are now stripped of their finery and left embedded in a shifting and unsteady fundament of relativism, so that they seem often grotesque and unreal. But it would be wrong to conclude that this development is retrogression. Only by flying off to this extreme could Nietzsche overcome the youthful enthusiasm

of his earlier visionary idealism. And in this period are laid the foundations on which he will build later. Having now completed his 'unlearning', he is ready to move forward, and the two following books, *Morgenröthe* (1881) and *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882), while still fundamentally 'positivistic' in spirit, do contain a new tone of hope and a new consciousness of the direction which is to be followed.

Chapter 6

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS NEW VALUES

1

NIETZSCHE was now homeless, a wanderer, a lone figure railing against the tendencies and the whole intellectual and spiritual temper of his time, moving from place to place in Italy, unable or unwilling to settle down anywhere for any length of time. From now to the end of his intellectual life he existed thus, staying for a month or two in one city, soon moving on, sometimes with a friend, always searching for a place where he could live in moderate comfort and write the books he felt to be of epoch-making importance. In 1880, mainly at Venice and Genoa, he worked on a new book, living simply and happily, mixing freely with the poorer people and earning the nickname 'il piccolo santo'. In July 1881 appeared the new work, *Morgenröthe*.

There is no doubt that he felt that this book marked a turning-point in his life. In *Ecce Homo* he says it began his 'campaign against morality' (XXI, 243), and, indeed, the most noteworthy feature is its more aggressive, more positive attitude towards the questions which occupy him. Not that he has yet a fully-formed answer to those questions—the tone throughout is fundamentally critical and destructive as before. Early in the first part he works out the conception of 'Sittlichkeit der Sitte'—morality as a matter of habit. The free man is immoral, and habit is an authority which is obeyed not because it is useful but because it is authority (sect. 9; X, 15 ff.). Cruelty is fundamentally entwined with the creation of moral principles, which are in essence the result of the will to power. In this sense he analyses the strength and weakness of the *vita contemplativa* (sects. 62 ff.; X, 59 ff.). He sets his face resolutely against the thesis that the purpose of morality is to ensure happiness (sect. 108; X, 95). Motives can never be known, let alone judged (sect. 116; X, 110). In fact, we not only perceive the world, all perception is our creation (sect. 129, X, 117). Moral judgments are simply the expression of the will to power (sect. 189; X, 170). Very much in the spirit of La Rochefoucauld, he analyses the 'altruistic' motives—pity, self-sacrifice, and so on—in terms designed to reveal their

essential basis in egoism. There is an illuminating section on the 'Don Juan der Erkenntniss', who searches for truth, not for the love of it, but for the sake of the chase, who goes on with it until at last all that is left to him is the *pain* of knowledge (sect. 327; X, 247). And the last of the five parts is full of the exalted joy of a man who has tasted at last the heady wine of a scepticism which is fruitful and positive. In the last section he characterizes himself as a bird flying ever onward over the sea, beyond the furthest limit yet reached, with the hope of discovering a new continent of knowledge (sect. 575; X, 353).

Just after the appearance of this book, in August 1881, at Sils Maria, Nietzsche underwent an experience which became central to his thought—the sudden conviction of Eternal Recurrence. He describes the event in *Ecce Homo* (XXI, 247 f.). At the time he kept it secret from everyone, though he betrayed unusual excitement in a letter to Peter Gast.[1] But his papers include many descriptions of the Recurrence-idea from this time. Sometimes he is a little doubtful (*Nachlass* XI, 172), and the real nature of his thought is exposed in his:

> Wer nicht an einen *Kreisprozess des Alls* glaubt, *muss* an den *willkürlichen* Gott glauben — so bedingt sich meine Betrachtung im Gegensatz zu allen bisherigen theistischen! (*Nachlass* XI, 178.)[2]

His health was better now and he worked happily during the autumn at Genoa on *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. This was finished at the end of January 1882—the 'Sanctus Januarius', to which he dedicated the fourth part, the blessed month of ebullient happiness and strength, of new hope and a new conviction of certainty, which allows him to brave the incomprehension of men without despair. The book is the fruit of his recovery from the depression into which he had fallen the year before, and through it we hear continually the voice of a man thanking and blessing the powers which have sustained him through his trial. There is an intoxicated resilience and thirst for battle throughout which is in direct contrast to the desperation of previous books. The same criticism of human ideals is carried out, with a new crystallization of the fundamental point:

> Leben — das heisst fortwährend etwas von sich abstossen, das sterben will; Leben — das heisst: grausam und unerbittlich gegen Alles sein, was schwach und alt an

[1] 14 August, 1881 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 70).

[2] Jaspers calls Recurrence Nietzsche's only alternative to belief in God (*Nietzsche*, p. 319 ff.). His godlessness, he says, is 'the growing restlessness of a unconscious seeker after God' (p. 386).

uns, und nicht nur an uns, wird. Leben — das heisst also: ohne Pietät gegen Sterbende, Elende und Greise sein? Immerfort Mörder sein? . . . (sect. 26; XII, 66).

Again he devotes a great deal of space to the question of German culture, and again deals some hard blows at Wagner.[1] And the ideal of honesty, which offers the only hope of any real culture, is becoming much more subtle, much more complex than the rather blustering earlier dogmatism. His criticism of idealism is summed up thus:

Der Mensch ist durch seine Irrthümer erzogen worden: er sah sich erstens immer nur unvollständig, zweitens legte er sich erdichtete Eigenschaften bei, drittens fühlte er sich in einer falschen Rangordnung zu Thier und Natur, viertens fand er immer neue Gütertafeln und nahm sie eine Zeit lang als ewig und unbedingt, so dass bald dieser bald jener menschliche Trieb und Zustand an der ersten Stelle stand und in Folge dieser Schätzung veredelt wurde. Rechnet man die Wirkung dieser vier Irrthümer weg, so hat man auch Humanität Menschlichkeit und 'Menschenwürde' hinweggerechnet (sect. 115; XII, 148).

Knowledge is only a means, not an end—a significant change of perspective from the time of *Menschliches*. Christianity is opposed on the same grounds as before, but there is a strangely convincing little parable of a madman who accused men of having killed God because they could not bear His witnessing them continually. Nietzsche's language here shows how deeply he feels the reality of the God he will not admit to his thought:

Wir haben ihn getödtet. . . . Aber wie haben wir dies gemacht? Wie vermochten wir das Meer auszutrinken? Wer gab uns den Schwamm, um den ganzen Horizont wegzuwischen? Was thaten wir, als wir diese Erde von ihrer Sonne losketteten? Wohin bewegt sie sich nun? . . . Giebt es noch ein Oben und Unten? Irren wir nicht wie durch ein unendliches Nichts? . . . Das Heiligste und Mächtigste, was die Welt bisher besass, es ist unter unsern Messern verblutet — wer wischt dies Blut von uns ab? . . . Ist nicht die Grösse dieser That zu gross für uns? Müssen wir nicht selber zu Göttern werden, um nur ihrer würdig zu erscheinen? (sect. 125; XII, 156).

At the beginning of the last part[2] he takes stock of his position, describes the new life surging in him, and formulates his principle:

Amor Fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe! Ich will keinen Krieg gegen das Hässliche führen. Ich will nicht anklagen, ich will nicht einmal die Ankläger anklagen. *Wegsehen* sei meine einzige Verneinung. Und, Alles in Allem und Grossem, ich will irgendwann einmal nur noch ein Jasagender sein! (sect. 276; XII, 200).

And one can say that he remained true to this declaration in his later work. Even the attacks on Wagner and Christianity in the books of his last year are infinitely more positive than what he had written

[1] Cf. sects. 80, 99 (XII, 105, 125). But the famous 'Sternenfreundschaft' section 229 (XII, 203) shows how deeply he still appreciates his contact with the Master.

[2] The last in the first edition. The fifth part, *Wir Furchtlosen*, was added in 1886.

before. From this January we may date the overcoming of the critical and destructive thinking which began with *Menschliches*. A later section 'In media vita' (sect. 324; XII, 234) breathes the same spirit of serene and hopeful joy which is to carry him on to *Zarathustra*. And the last section, 'Incipit tragoedia', explicitly names the latter, and is almost word for word the first section of the later book. Around the figure of Zarathustra, indeed, his positive ideas are beginning to crystallize.

2

His growing interest in the problems of living rather than thinking, of conduct rather than knowledge, leads him in the early pages of *Morgenröthe* to consideration of the metaphysical basis of custom, with this conclusion:

> Was ist das Herkommen? Eine höhere Autorität, welcher man gehorcht, nicht weil sie das uns *Nützliche* befiehlt, sondern weil sie *befiehlt* (sect. 9; X, 16).

This is one of the few cases where we can be reasonably sure that he is directly borrowing from his French reading—in this case of Montaigne, who says in his last essay:

> Or les lois se maintiennent en credict, non par ce qu'elles sont justes, mais par ce qu'elles sont lois; c'est le fondement mystique de leur authorité: elles n'en ont point d'autre (III, 13, p. 577).

It is true that the same idea occurs in Pascal (*Pensées* 294), but the emphasis there is on the fallibility of the law, not on the duty of the citizen to obey it because it is the law, and not for any other consideration of justice, usefulness, etc. It is also true that Nietzsche is speaking of custom and not of codified law; and yet the essential point, that our conduct is governed by rules which are justified not because they are socially or personally useful or just, but simply by the fact that they are rules—this is identically realized in the two passages. Furthermore, the matter appears to be clinched by the fact that a few pages farther on Nietzsche actually transcribes a passage from the same essay of Montaigne's, proving that he was certainly reading it while writing:

> 'Welch' gutes Kopfkissen ist der Zweifel für einen wohlgebauten Kopf!' — diess Wort Montaigne's hat Pascal immer erbittert . . . (sect. 46; X, 49).[1]

We can see from this that Nietzsche was reading and meditating Montaigne's last essay, and also that the attitude we saw emerging in

[1] Montaigne had actually written: O que c'est un doux et mol chevet, et sain, que l'ignorance et l'incuriosité, à reposer une tête bien faicte (III, 13, p. 580).

Menschliches, of concentration on the soluble problems of conduct, has now become the background of all his thought. At this time he is in the position of Montaigne rather than Pascal. He is carrying through a careful criticism of our moral prejudices, but it is in the spirit of comfortable scepticism of the *Essais* rather than with the tragic apprehension of conflict and terror of Pascal. He will later feel the chasm before him. It will drive him to nihilism and finally to madness. But now he is witty, clear-sighted, tolerant of all except deception, and unconcerned with what cannot be decided. These qualities are eminently marked in Montaigne and are a great advance on the intellectual mysticism from which Nietzsche started, an advance which the Frenchman has helped to bring about.

Here Nietzsche is concerned above all with the proper task of man, to know his own being and live his own life:

> Wer sich selber wirklich besitzt, das heisst, wer sich endgültig *erobert hat*, betrachtet es fürderhin als sein eigenes Vorrecht, sich zu strafen, sich zu begnadigen, sich zu bemitleiden: er braucht diess Niemandem zuzugestehen, er kann es aber auch einem Andern mit Freiheit in die Hand geben, einem Freunde zum Beispiel, — aber er weiss, dass er damit ein *Recht* verleiht und dass man nur aus dem Besitz der *Macht* heraus Rechte verleihen kann (sect. 437; X, 286).

We can see the idea of the 'Wille zur Macht' taking shape. But here it is important to note the conception that the personality must 'conquer itself'. The cultivation of the 'moi', the Epicureanism of Montaigne, which has superseded the pessimism of Nietzsche's early years, leads to a spiritual hedonism which is worthy but nugatory, and is the essential quality of decadence as later defined by Nietzsche, unless it is accompanied by an urge to self-discipline and self-education. It is Montaigne's greatest achievement, which marks him out from the common run of thinkers in the Epicurean tradition, that he saw the attainment of self-consciousness as a continual battle in which the process was one of purification and refinement, a struggle for mastery between the inner personality and the distractions of flesh and spirit. This, too, Nietzsche takes over from him. Montaigne expresses the ideal frequently in the *Essais*:

> Or c'est estre, mais ce n'est pas vivre, que se tenir attaché et obligé par nécessité à un seul train. Les plus belles âmes sont celles qui ont plus de variété et de souplesse. . . . Ce n'est pas estre amy de soy, et moins encore maistre, c'est en estre esclave, de se suivre incessamment, et estre si pris à ses inclinations qu'on n'en puisse fourvoyer, qu'on ne les puisse tordre (III, 3, p. 68 f.).

Montaigne sees this discipline as the pattern of the good life, which all men can achieve in varying degrees. Nietzsche sees it more as a

criterion of worth of the personality, and already he is moving towards the view that only a small proportion of mankind is capable of it. This will develop into the great distinction between 'lords' and 'slaves'. But at this time he is thinking in terms of the personal life, and the essence of the doctrine of living dangerously is already formulated. We must experiment with ourselves, we must conquer ourselves continually in order to be worthy of ourselves (sect. 501; X, 314).

In the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) this tendency moves to a joyful and lyrical peak. The description of his recovery from illness which opens the book gives the tone of the whole, which is a glorification of difficulties overcome and willing acceptance of man's place in nature. The emphasis is on the task of making our knowledge *instinctive* (sect. 11; XII, 48). The creation of a personal style and scheme of values and content of belief—this is the object of living. But one must struggle always to be worthy of one's ideals:

> Du hast da ein vornehmes Ideal vor Augen: aber bist *du* auch ein so vornehmer Stein, dass aus dir solch ein Götterbild gebildet werden dürfte? Und ohne diess — ist all deine Arbeit nicht eine barbarische Bildhauerei? Eine Lästerung deines Ideals? (sect. 215; XII, 187).

The law of our being insists that all our actions should spring from our own personality, not from morality or custom:

> 'Lieber schuldig bleiben, als mit einer Münze zahlen, die nicht unser Bild trägt' — so will es unsere Souveränetät (sect. 252; XII, 194).

And no man should impose his ideal on any other:

> Ich will nicht, dass man mir Etwas nachmache: ich will, dass Jeder sich Etwas vormache, dasselbe was *ich* thue (sect. 255; XII, 195).

This belief in the law of one's own being, the spark of personality which guarantees us against following the way of life appropriate to others, is what gives purpose and meaning to humanity, despite the innate scepticism inseparable from consciousness:

> Ich will mehr, ich bin kein Suchender. Ich will für mich eine eigene Sonne schaffen (sect. 320; XII, 234).

As Montaigne had said:

> Je veux estre riche par moy, non par emprunt (II, 16, p. 586).

Indeed, this point of view is expressed forcibly throughout the *Essais*:

> Nous autres principallement, qui vivons une vie privée qui n'est en montre qu'à nous, devons avoir establi un patron au dedans, auquel toucher nos actions, et, selon

iceluy, nous caresser tantost, tantost nous chastier. J'ay mes lois et ma court pour juger de moy et m'y addresse plus qu'ailleurs. Je restreins bien selon autruy mes actions, mais je ne les entens que selon moy (III, 2, p. 45).

Each man has in himself 'une forme sienne, une forme maistresse', which governs the life he leads:

Avez-vous sceu méditer et manier votre vie? vous avez faict la plus grande besoigne de toutes (III, 13, p. 651).

Nietzsche, like Montaigne, sees that it is impossible to explain our inner being, but it is possible to be true to it and to see how it is related to the business of living:

... du bist immer ein Anderer. ... Wir verneinen und müssen verneinen, weil Etwas in uns leben und sich bejahen *will*, Etwas, das wir vielleicht noch nicht kennen, noch nicht sehen! (sect. 307; XII, 226).

The acceptance of Kant's categorical imperative is cowardly:

... weil sie verräth, dass du dich selber noch nicht entdeckt, dir selber noch kein eigenes, eigenstes Ideal geschaffen hast: — diess nämlich könnte niemals das eines Anderen sein, geschweige denn Aller, Aller! ... dass *jede* Handlung, beim Hinblick oder Rückblick auf sie, eine undurchdringliche Sache ist und bleibt. ... Wir *wollen die werden, die wir sind* ... (sect. 335; XII, 246 f.).

In this passage it is clear that Nietzsche, like Montaigne, has advanced beyond the somewhat flabby Epicureanism which sees in introspection and the cultivation of the personality only an excuse for subjectivism in thought and egoism in morals. We have seen that Nietzsche earlier had doubts of the method of introspection on technical grounds connected with the inefficiency of the intellect as observer of its own working. This doubt has now become an explicit denial of Socrates' 'Know thyself'—the task is to know oneself, certainly, but in order to form oneself. 'Werde, der du bist.' We shall see this exhortation later in Nietzsche, indeed, the whole conception of the 'Schaffende' is built upon it. 'Vornehmheit' involves a strict discipline and a continual struggle, which is an intrinsic part of Montaigne's teaching. And for both him and Nietzsche there is no place for shame in a life governed by this principle:

Und so lange ihr euch noch irgendwie vor euch selber *schämt* gehört ihr noch nicht zu uns (sect. 107; XII, 138).

Quant à moy, je puis désirer en général estre autre; je puis condamner et me desplaire de ma forme universelle, et supplier Dieu pour mon entière réformation et pour l'excuse de ma foiblesse naturelle. Mais cela, je ne le doits nommer repentir. ... Mes actions sont réglées et conformes à ce que je suis et à ma condition. Je ne puis faire mieux (III, 2, p. 56 f.).

3

On these two books, then, Montaigne has exercised a dominating influence. It is natural that the effect of reading La Rochefoucauld should be less apparent now than in the earlier more cynical and sceptical books. But there can be no doubt that Nietzsche is still studying him intensely. The investigation into moral prejudices begun in previous books is continued in *Morgenröthe* (1881), which is largely concerned with distinguishing the real springs of human action from our rationalizations of them, with that same contradiction between living and thinking which is at the root of La Rochefoucauld:

> Wir ziehen immer noch die Folgerungen von Urtheilen, die wir für falsch halten, von Lehren, an die wir nicht mehr glauben — durch unsere Gefühle (sect. 99; X, 89).[1]

A little later Nietzsche draws a distinction between himself and La Rochefoucauld:

> 'Die Sittlichkeit leugnen' — das kann *einmal* heissen: leugnen, dass die sittlichen Motive, welche die Menschen *angeben*, wirklich sie zu ihren Handlungen getrieben haben, — es ist also die Behauptung, dass die Sittlichkeit in Worten bestehe und zur groben und feinen Betrügerei (namentlich Selbstbetrügerei) der Menschen gehöre, und vielleicht gerade bei den durch Tugend Berühmtesten am meisten. *Sodann* kann es heissen: leugnen, dass die sittlichen Urtheile auf Wahrheiten beruhen — hier wird zugegeben, dass sie Motive des Handelns wirklich sind, dass aber auf diese Weise Irrthümer, als Grund alles sittlichen Urtheilens, die Menschen zu ihren moralischen Handlungen treiben. Dies ist *mein* Gesichtspunkt: doch möchte ich am wenigsten verkennen, dass *in sehr vielen Fällen* ein feines Misstrauen nach Art des ersten Gesichtspunktes, also im Geiste des La Rochefoucauld, auch im Rechte und jedenfalls vom höchsten allgemeinen Nutzen ist (sect. 103; X, 91).

It may be questioned whether Nietzsche is quite fair to La Rochefoucauld here. He has before extended the latter's ideas in a direction entirely his own, and here again he seems to be trying to go one better than his master, by placing the essential deception which is at the root of moral thinking not in the realm of individual consciousness but in the very nature of moral judgments themselves. It is not, he thinks, that we deceive ourselves, but that, in considering the moral basis of action we are acquiescing in error, basing our whole thought on an initial series of errors. This is a clear pointer to the subsequent development of Nietzsche's thought. It may be legitimately considered, not, as Nietzsche considers it here, as a new discovery and an advance on La Rochefoucauld, but rather as a

[1] Cf. La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes* 102, 103, etc.

theory which explains some of the facts that the latter had laid bare. But the care with which Nietzsche here dissociates his theory from that of his master, apart from underlining his preoccupation with that moralist, should also not blind us to the great extent to which he is indebted to him. And further, La Rochefoucauld's revelation of the rôle played by egoistic impulses in human conduct is coupled with the view that we are duped by our 'amour-propre', which clouds our judgment and distorts our action, so that, to this extent, his views are akin to Pascal's, that 'le moi est haissable'. Now Nietzsche has seen from the first that the final good is to be sought only in the self, and his thought is tending already in the direction of the enlightened egoism which is given such powerful expression in *Zarathustra*. So that our 'amour-propre' is not quite the monster La Rochefoucauld had characterized. In *Morgenröthe* Nietzsche sketches the lines of a reconciliation between the two views:

Die Allermeisten, was sie auch immer von ihrem 'Egoismus' denken und sagen mögen, thun trotzdem ihr Leben lang Nichts für ihr ego, sondern nur für das Phantom von ego, welches sich in den Köpfen ihrer Umgebung über sie gebildet und sich ihnen mitgetheilt hat; — in Folge dessen leben sie Alle zusammen in einem Nebel von unpersönlichen, halbpersönlichen Meinungen und willkürlichen, gleichsam dichterischen Wertschätzungen . . . alle diese sich selber unbekannten Menschen glauben an das blutlose Abstraktum 'Mensch', das heisst an eine Fiktion. . . . Alles aus dem Grunde, dass jeder Einzelne in dieser Mehrzahl kein wirkliches ihm zugängliches und von ihm ergründetes ego der allgemeinen blassen Fiktion entgegenzustellen und sie damit zu vernichten vermag (sect. 105; X, 93).

And yet even here, where Nietzsche is in a sense reversing La Rochefoucauld's judgment, he is in reality only putting a different emphasis on an important part of it.

In these pages, too, Nietzsche follows up his investigation of the unconscious conflicts within us, which result in the almost fortuitous domination and expression of one of the conflicting passions:

Während 'wir' uns also über die Heftigkeit eines Triebs zu beklagen meinen, ist es im Grunde ein Trieb, *welcher über einen anderen klagt*; das heisst: die Wahrnehmung des Leidens an einer solchen *Heftigkeit* setzt voraus, dass es einen ebenso heftigen oder noch heftigeren anderen Trieb giebt, und dass ein *Kampf* bevorsteht, in welchem unser Intellect Partei nehmen muss (sect. 109; X, 99).[1]

And need it be urged, he says:

. . . dass auch unsere moralischen Urtheile und Wertschätzungen nur Bilder und Phantasien über einen uns unbekannten physiologischen Vorgang sind, eine Art angewöhnter Sprache, gewisse Nervenreize zu bezeichnen? (sect. 119; X, 115).[2]

[1] Cf. La Rochefoucauld's: Il y a dans le coeur humain une génération perpétuelle de passions, de sorte que la ruine de l'une est presque toujours l'établissement d'une autre (10).

[2] Cf. *Maximes* 297, etc.

He fully appreciates the rôle played by our own conception of what we are in distorting our judgment and our character:

Unsere Meinung über uns aber, die wir auf diesem falschen Wege gefunden haben, das sogenannte 'ich', arbeitet fürderhin mit an unserem Charakter und Schicksal (sect. 115; X, 109).[1]

In his long analysis of pity he exposes a view essentially akin to La Rochefoucauld's (sects 133, 224; X, 127 ff., 208). And of love he says this:

Jener ist hohl und will voll werden, Dieser ist überfüllt und will sich ausleeren, — Beide treibt es, sich ein Individuum zu suchen das ihnen dazu dient. Und diesen Vorgang, im höchsten Sinne verstanden, nennt man beidemal mit Einem Worte: Liebe — Wie? die Liebe sollte etwas Unegoistisches sein? (sect. 145; X, 140).[2]

He has similar things to say of tenderness, altruism, admiration, heroism, and the other virtues. He analyses the egoistic impulse of the individual in savage terms (sect. 285; X, 231 ff.), which remind one of La Rochefoucauld's long suppressed *maxime* on 'amour-propre'. There are still many aphorisms in this book which follow the latter not only in their thought but also in that antithetical expression which we have noticed before:

Die Einen werden durch grosses Lob schamhaft, die Anderen frech (sect. 525; X, 322).

The whole problem is summed up in Nietzsche's fundamental point that there is a final mystery at the root of our moral experience. Our actions are unfathomable. A long section on the 'unknown world of the subject' contains these lines:

Das, was den Menschen so schwer zu begreifen fällt, ist ihre Unwissenheit über sich selber, von den ältesten Zeiten bis jetzt . . . (he speaks of Socrates' and Plato's view that right action must follow true knowledge) . . . sie waren in diesem Grundsatz immer noch die Erben des allgemeinen Wahnsinns und Dünkels: dass es ein Wissen um das Wesen einer Handlung gebe. . . . Die Handlungen sind *niemals* Das, als was sie uns erscheinen . . . und alle Handlungen sind wesentlich unbekannt (sect. 116; X, 109 f.),

which follows La Rochefoucauld not only in the view that our actions are not what they seem, but also in the much deeper perception of the final mystery which surrounds all action and all attempts at moral interpretation.

In the *Nachlass* from this period (1881) there are two mentions of

[1] Cf. La Rochefoucauld's view that we are all play-acting in front of ourselves: Il y a des gens qui n'auraient jamais été amoureux s'ils n'avaient pas entendu parler de l'amour (136).

[2] Cf. *Maximes* 81, etc.

La Rochefoucauld which show again that Nietzsche is passing beyond the purely critical side of his thought to a more positive view of man:

Bisher gab es Verherrlicher des Menschen und Verunglimpfer desselben, beide aber vom *moralischen* Standpunkte aus. *La Rochefoucauld* und die Christen fanden den Anblick des Menschen *hässlich*: dies ist aber ein moralisches Urtheil und ein anderes *kannte* man nicht! *Wir* rechnen ihn zur Natur, die weder böse noch gut ist... (*Nachlass* X, 409).

La Rochefoucauld irrt sich nur darin, dass er die Motive, welche er für die wahren hält, niedriger taxirt als die anderen, angeblichen: das heisst, *er glaubt im Grunde noch* an die anderen und nimmt den Maasstab daher: er setzt den Menschen herab, indem er ihn gewisser Motive für *unfähig* hält (*Nachlass* XI, 245 f.).

We have seen exactly this criticism in Nietzsche before. And the reason now is the same as before. Nietzsche is concentrating on the critical aspects of La Rochefoucauld's view to the exclusion of the positive side of it, and is also elaborating a theory of his own which he feels goes beyond his master. Again, he is doing less than justice to the latter; but again, the very care with which he dissociates himself from him shows how preoccupied he is with him.

In the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) the criticism of morality is carried further than before, as here:

Habsucht und Liebe: wie verschieden empfinden wir bei jedem dieser Worte!... und doch könnte es derselbe Trieb sein, zweimal benannt.... Unsere Nächstenliebe —ist sie nicht ein Drang nach neuem Eigenthum?... Unsere Lust an uns selber will sich so aufrecht erhalten, dass sie immer wieder etwas Neues *in uns selber* verwandelt—das eben heisst Besitzen... ja dass man aus dieser Liebe den Begriff Liebe als den Gegensatz des Egoismus hergenommen hat, während sie vielleicht gerade der unbefangenste Ausdruck des Egoismus ist... Es giebt wohl hier und da auf Erden eine Art Fortsetzung der Liebe, bei der jenes habsüchtige Verlangen zweier Personen nach einander einer neuen Begierde und Habsucht, einem *gemeinsamen* höheren Durste nach einem über ihnen stehenden Ideale gewichen ist: aber wer kennt diese Liebe? wer hat sie erlebt? Ihr rechter Name ist *Freundschaft* (sect. 14; XII, 51 ff.).

Here the effect of La Rochefoucauld's analysis of love is clearly seen.[1] Nietzsche is conscious of his debt to the latter when he says, in reference to the moral scepticism of Christianity, that we have an enormous advantage over the Ancients, such as Seneca and Epictetus, so that they seem simple to us:

... es ist uns dabei zu Muthe, als ob ein Kind vor einem alten Manne oder eine junge schöne Begeisterte vor La Rochefoucauld redete: wir kennen Das, was Tugend ist, besser! (sect. 122; XII, 153).

The choice of the Frenchman here as an example is indicative of the

[1] Cf. *Maximes* 74, 77, and especially 69.

respect Nietzsche has for him. He still often tries his hand at epigrams in the French manner:

> Freigiebigkeit ist bei Reichen oft nur eine Art Schüchternheit (sect. 199; XII, 184),

and he loses no opportunity of emphasizing the 'duperie' of egoism:

> Er hält aus Trotz an einer Sache fest, die ihm durchsichtig geworden ist—er nennt es aber 'Treue' (sect. 229; XII, 190),

a sentiment with which La Rochefoucauld would have heartily agreed. And Nietzsche urges again that our effect in society depends not on what we are but on what we seem to be (sect. 236; XII, 191).

Towards the end of the book he makes a complete statement of his argument which interestingly shows how his thought is built almost entirely on La Rochefoucauld's premisses:

> ... Wie? Du bewunderst den kategorischen Imperativ in dir? Diese 'Festigkeit' deines sogenannten moralischen Urtheils? Diese 'Unbedingtheit' des Gefühls 'so wie ich, müssen hierin Alle urtheilen'? Bewundere vielmehr deine *Selbstsucht* darin! ... Selbstsucht nämlich ist es, *sein* Urtheil als Allgemeingesetz zu empfinden; und eine blinde kleinliche und anspruchslose Selbstsucht hinwiederum, weil sie verräth, dass du dich selber noch nicht entdeckt, dir selber noch kein eigenes, eigenstes Ideal geschaffen hast:—diess nämlich könnte niemals das eines Anderen sein, geschweige denn Aller, Aller! ... (sect. 335; XII, 243 ff.).

This passage brings out very strongly the crossing and interpenetration of two streams of thought in Nietzsche's mind. On the one hand the investigation of moral action and moral judgment in which he followed La Rochefoucauld has led him to the same conclusion as his master, that the rôle of our egoism in both is paramount, that our 'morality' is a rationalization of essentially non-moral impulses and motives. And this recognition is now joined to that other element in his thought, that the goal of the individual is to be sought in the individual himself and not elsewhere, that the individual is unique and a law to himself, that 'become what thou art' is the only valid ethical exhortation. This is, of course, strongly marked in all his work from the third *Unzeitgemässe* onwards. We have seen what he owed to Montaigne in this connection, but it is also clear that the reading of La Rochefoucauld has played a part, though less than that of Montaigne, in fixing the conception.

4

So far in Nietzsche these two directions are evenly balanced—the mainly negative and destructive influence of La Rochefoucauld runs

parallel with the positive ideal of personality he has largely derived from Montaigne. And the influence of Pascal is gradually changing its impact on him. He is becoming aware that Pascal's radical analysis of man is not simply on a par with La Rochefoucauld's but raises issues far more ultimate and more terrifying. This change is already in train in *Morgenröthe* (1881)—the first book in which Nietzsche refers to Pascal continually and is plainly reading him while writing. All the 'critical' questions brought up by Pascal are dealt with, but there is also the beginning of a proper consideration of Pascal as a man and not simply a complex of ideas.

That Nietzsche is beginning to look behind the sceptical Pascal to the agonized mystic beneath is shown by such passages as this:

'Welch gutes Kopfkissen ist der Zweifel für einen wohlgebauten Kopf!' — diess Wort Montaignes hat Pascal immer erbittert, denn es verlangte Niemanden gerade so stark nach einem guten Kopfkissen als ihn. Woran fehlte es doch? (sect. 46; X, 49).[1]

But it is clear that he has not yet fully understood Pascal's position. He speaks here as though Montaigne and Pascal were both in search of a safe anchorage in the transitory world of shifting values and deceptive appearances, as if Montaigne's 'pillow of doubt' would suffice for Pascal. He has realized that it is not only the first half of the *Pensées*, the analysis of 'man without God', which is important, that this radical criticism is not carried out for its own sake. He has seen the 'effroi métaphysique' which is at the root of Pascal's search for God; but he still quite misunderstands the cast of Pascal's mind, which does not require a safe 'pillow', to shelter him, from the 'chose horrible, de sentir s'écouler tout ce qu'on possede' (212), but is searching for a principle of meaning which will explain and give significance to this very horror and fear and doubt. 'Woran fehlte es doch?' asks Nietzsche, and his question betrays an incomplete understanding of the issues involved.

He frequently occupies himself with Pascal's dictum: 'le moi est haissable', and seems to be seeking a way round the problem it raises:

Gesetzt, wir empfänden den Anderen so, wie er sich selber empfindet — das was Schopenhauer Mitleid und was richtiger Ein-Leid, Ein-Leidigkeit hiesse — so würden wir ihn hassen müssen, wenn er sich selber, gleich Pascal, hassenswerth findet. Und so empfand wohl auch Pascal im Ganzen gegen die Menschen, und ebenso das alte Christenthum, das man, unter Nero, des odium generis humani 'überführte', wie Tacitus meldet (sect. 63; X, 59).

Wenn unser Ich, nach Pascal und dem Christenthume, immer *hassenswerth* ist,

[1]Quoted in part, p. 71 above.

wie dürften wir es auch gestatten und annehmen, dass Andere es liebten — sei es Gott oder Mensch? Es wäre wider allen guten Anstand, sich lieben zu lassen und dabei recht wohl zu wissen, dass man nur Hass verdiene — um von anderen abwehrenden Empfindungen zu schweigen (sect. 79; X, 75; cf. also sects. 64, 68; X, 60 ff.).[1]

This somewhat unbalanced view of Pascal, which sees him as a sort of pedlar of patent medicines, trying to increase his sales by playing on the fears of his audience, is perhaps the consequence of Nietzsche's not appreciating in the *Pensées* the connection between the analysis of man, the criticism of his knowledge and the description of the essence of his greatness. Nietzsche is reading Pascal with pleasure and avidity, but with a prejudged rejection of his conclusions. He is impressed by the profundity of his thought, but on his guard against what emerges from it.

Ein Tropfen Blut zu viel oder zu wenig im Gehirn kann unser Leben unsäglich elend und hart machen, dass wir mehr an diesem Tropfen zu leiden haben als Prometheus an seinem Geier. Aber zum Schrecklichsten kommt es erst, wenn man nicht einmal *weiss*, dass jener Tropfen die Ursache ist, sondern 'der Teufel' oder 'die Sünde' (sect. 83; X, 76).[2]

Nevertheless, it is plain that Nietzsche has studied not only the analysis of 'man without God' but also the positive teaching of Christianity in the second half of the *Pensées*, as witness a long discussion of Pascal's conception of the 'deus absconditus' in which he detects a 'dash of immorality' (sect. 91; X, 83). And Nietzsche is familiar with the *Lettres Provinciales*, and considers that the Jesuits were the enlightened party in the dispute (*Nachlass* XI, 279). And he praises the 'mystère de Jésus' warmly:

Pascal's Gespräch mit Jesus ist schöner als irgend etwas im Neuen Testament! Es ist die schwermütigste Holdseligkeit die je zu Worte gekommen ist. An diesem Jesus ist seitdem nicht mehr fortgedichtet worden, deshalb ist nach Port-Royal das Christenthum überall im Verfall (*Nachlass* XI, 71).

But he couples this with criticism:

Pascal rieth, sich an das Christenthum zu gewöhnen, man werde spüren, dass die Leidenschaften schwinden. Diess heisst: seine *Unredlichkeit* sich bezahlt machen und sich ihrer freuen. Der Hauptfehler Pascal's: er meint zu beweisen, dass das Christenthum *wahr* ist, weil es *nöthig* ist — das setzt voraus, dass eine gute und wahre Vorsehung existiert, welche alles *Nöthige* auch *wahr* schafft: es könnte aber nöthige Irrthümer geben! Und endlich: die Nöthigkeit könnte nur so *erscheinen*, weil man sich an den Irrthum schon so gewöhnt hat, dass es wie eine zweite Natur gebieterisch geworden ist (ibid.).

[1] Cf. p. 87, note 7 below, for a possible source of this answer to Pascal.
[2] The same point, again with reference to Pascal, is put in sect. 86 (X, 78 f.).

It is noteworthy that in thus framing his rejection of Pascal he makes use of the conception of our 'second nature' which is custom (in this case religious belief) which he had joyfully taken over from the Frenchman. In *Morgenröthe*, section 435 (X, 293), he had analysed this idea on Pascalian lines. Now he turns it against its author. He also makes use of the Pascalian 'common error' theory, which we have noticed before. It was, perhaps, inevitable that he should assume that the 'pari' is Pascal's main argument for Christianity. In this he follows Voltaire, and the mistake has been committed by other anti-Christian critics of Pascal. Pascal's argument is not that the 'pari' proves Christianity, but that it exposes a need for Christian belief and drives the agnostic to search for the truth. Only when he finds it will he see that it is both necessary and true. Pascal does not postulate this providential creation of a union of truth and necessity, as Nietzsche assumes, but argues it by the method of 'convergent proof *after* the 'pari'.

Nietzsche's thought is moving away from the facile view of man as the measure of all things, to a conception of a totality of being in which man holds a privileged and central position, but cannot know himself without some vision of the principle of the whole:

> Erst am Ende der Erkenntniss aller Dinge wird der Mensch sich selber erkannt haben. Denn die Dinge sind nur die Grenzen des Menschen (sect. 48; X, 49),

which owes something perhaps to Pascal's thought in the fragment on the two infinities (72). Nietzsche goes on:

> Wir sind in unserm Netze, wir Spinnen, und was wir auch darin fangen, wir können Nichts fangen, als was sich eben in *unserem* Netze fangen lässt (sect. 117 X, 112).

For both Nietzsche and for Pascal, as for most philosophers, this subjectivity of perception is a fact to be accepted, and if knowledge is to be conceived as possible, some principle of cognition has to be found which is protected against the deception of the senses. Pascal found this principle in the threefold machinery of *raison-coeur-foi*, reflecting the threefold nature of being, manifest in the orders—physical, mental, and spiritual. Nietzsche makes the very weakness of our position—that all judgment is conditioned by subjective elements—into a principle of value, by his conception of the personality as a unifying reality. Judgments are of value in so far as they are our own judgments. The intellectual side of the personality maintains its function, but it is transcended by the action of the whole personality in judging and acting. There is more than a superficial

parallelism in the psychology of Pascal and Nietzsche. What Pascal called the 'coeur' is in fact Nietzsche's principle of 'creative thought', i.e. the personality expressing itself in ideas. For both of them a rationalistic scheme of thinking breaks down, and the reason must be transcended if we are to achieve real knowledge. The parallelism is not, of course, complete—Pascal's 'faith' is linked to the revelation of truth, which stamps what is at first merely true belief with the certainty of knowledge. 'Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais pas trouvé'. For Nietzsche there is no revelation, and intuition is therefore crowned only by myth (necessary belief). Therefore there is no certainty in Nietzsche's thinking, no 'truth', considered as dogma or body of static fact, only 'my truth' and 'your truth':

Jenes heisse, brennende Gefühl der Verzückten: 'dies ist die Wahrheit', dies mit Händen Greifen und mit Augen Sehen bei Denen, über welche die Phantasie Herr geworden ist, das Tasten an der neuen anderen Welt — ist eine Krankheit des Intellects, kein Weg der Erkenntniss (*Nachlass* XI, 8).

But Nietzsche's theory of the absolute value of the Self is not developed fully until later. At this time (1881) he seems to hold a deterministic view of its activity:

'Ich weiss durchaus nicht, was ich *thue*! Ich weiss durchaus nicht, was ich *thun soll*!' — Du hast Recht, aber zweifle nicht daran: *du wirst gethan*, in jedem Augenblick! (sect. 120; X, 116).[1]

But Pascal's view of personality has imprinted itself on him despite all attempts to counter it, and he accepts the logical consequences of his glorification of the strong Napoleonic personality:

... Und so wäre vielleicht doch der Thatendrang im Grunde Selbstflucht? — würde Pascal uns fragen. Und in der That! Bei den höchsten Exemplaren des Thatendranges möchte der Satz sich beweisen lassen (sect. 549; X, 341).

In this book Nietzsche describes France as the most Christian country in Europe, and the French tradition as essentially Christian.[2] He describes Pascal in these terms:

Da steht Pascal, in der Vereinigung von Gluth, Geist und Redlichkeit, der erste aller Christen — und man erwäge, was sich hier zu vereinigen hätte! (sect. 192; X, 173),

and one can see very clearly what attracted him to the Frenchman in this passage:

Vergleicht man Kant und Schopenhauer mit Plato Spinoza Pascal Rousseau Goethe in Absehung auf ihre Seele und nicht auf ihren Geist: so sind die

[1] A large number of aphorisms at this time are in short dialogues like this, which remind one of the Pascalian method, and were probably suggested to Nietzsche by Pascal.

[2] Cf. Introduction, p. xii above.

erstgenannten Denker im Nachtheil: ihre Gedanken machen nicht eine leidenschaftliche Seelen-Geschichte aus, es giebt da keinen Roman, keine Krisen, Katastrophen und Todesstunden zu errathen, ihr Denken ist nicht zugleich eine unwillkürliche Biographie einer Seele, sondern . . . (sect. 481; X, 305).[1]

In *Morgenröthe* Nietzsche does make a sincere attempt to overcome Pascal, and with him Christianity. He comes nearer to a complete understanding than hitherto, and it is apparent that he is concerned in himself with Pascal's problem, and is trying to avoid the acceptance of Pascal's answer. It is now not simply the sceptical Pascal who interests him, the Pascal who has been so fruitful in his analysis of man, but also the religious Pascal, who combined the terror of 'Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinies m'effraie' with the joyful certainty of 'Console-toi, tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé', whose religion is built on a complete experience of the blind evil of life and the tragic misery of man, who is so close to Nietzsche and so far away, whom Nietzsche can love and detest, admire and reject at once, but never despise. The two seem to be sparring at each other, seeking an opening. And it is therefore not surprising that in his sketches of this time (1881) Nietzsche repeatedly returns to the subject of Pascal. He is predominantly critical:

Der Zustand Pascals ist eine Passion, er hat ganz die Anzeichen und Folgen von Glück, Elend und tiefstem, dauerndem Ernste. Deshalb ist es eigentlich zum Lachen, ihn so gegen die Passion stolz zu sehen — es ist eine Art von Liebe, welche alle andern verachtet und die Menschen bemitleidet, ihrer zu entbehren. Pascal hat keine *nützliche* Liebe vor Augen, sondern lauter vergeudete, es ist alles egoistische Privatsache. Dass aus dieser Summe von Thätigkeiten sich eine neue Generation erzeugt, mit ihren Leidenschaften, Gewohnheiten und Mitteln (oder Nicht-Mitteln) sie zu befriedigen — das sieht er nicht. Immer nur den Einzelnen, nicht das Werdende (*Nachlass* X, 431).

Vergleich mit Pascal: haben *wir* nicht auch unsere Stärke in der Selbstbezwingung wie er? Er zu Gunsten Gottes, wir zu Gunsten der Redlichkeit? (*Nachlass* X, 430).

Das leidenschaftliche Interesse für uns verlieren und die Leidenschaft ausser uns wenden, gegen die Dinge (Wissenschaft) ist jetzt möglich. Was liegt an mir? Das hätte Pascal nicht sagen können! (*Nachlass* XI, 12).

Here Nietzsche is trying to defend himself against a force within himself which is too strong for him. Finally, from the same time, comes the shattering and tortured cry:

Ich habe die Verachtung Pascal's und den Fluch Schopenhauer's auf mir! . . . Freilich mit jener Anhänglichkeit eines Freundes welcher aufrecht bleibt, um Freund zu bleiben und nicht Liebhaber und Narr zu werden (*Nachlass*, 1881, XXI, 78 f.).

[1] Notice that Schopenhauer is put below the 'existential' thinkers and that Rousseau is included in the latter.

We shall see this attempt to enlist Pascal as a brother-in-arms and yet maintain the complete rejection of his position, more and more in Nietzsche's later work. He writes a famous letter to Gast defending his preoccupation with Christianity in *Morgenröthe*, saying he has never despised it; he regards it as 'das beste Stück idealen Lebens, welches ich wirklich kennen gelernt habe' (21 July, 1881; *Ges. Br.* IV, 69).

In the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) there is no mention of Pascal, but certain elements in the book seem to bear the impress of the reading of him. With Nietzsche's joyful acceptance of man's place in nature goes the full flowering of the doctrine of the sanctity of the personality, in which he owes so much to Montaigne. This has a complement in the view that our actions are eternal and therefore of value, and are indestructible. There can therefore be no shirking of moral issues:

> Was ich jetzt thue oder lasse, ist *für alles Kommende* so wichtig als das grösste Ereigniss der Vergangenheit: in dieser ungeheueren Perspective der Wirkung sind alle Handlungen gleich gross und klein (sect. 233; XII, 180).

Pascal makes the same point repeatedly (e.g. 219). The view here expressed by Nietzsche is a fundamental ingredient of the later doctrine of Recurrence. We may say that the glorification of personality, which finds its poetic expression in the teaching of the Superman, is based on the thought of the French moralists, and chiefly Montaigne, but that in so far as it is a doctrine of complete moral responsibility Pascal has influenced it more than the others.

> Doch man wird es begriffen haben, worauf ich hinaus will, nämlich dass es immer noch ein *metaphysischer Glaube* ist, auf dem unser Glaube an die Wissenschaft ruht — dass auch wir Erkennenden von heute, wir Gottlosen und Antimetaphysiker, auch *unser* Feuer noch von dem Brande nehmen, der ein Jahrtausende alter Glaube entzündet hat, jener Christen-Glaube, der auch der Glaube Plato's war, dass Gott die Wahrheit ist, dass die Wahrheit göttlich ist — Aber wie, wenn diess gerade immer mehr unglaubwürdig wird, wenn Nichts sich mehr als göttlich erweist, es sei denn der Irrthum, die Blindheit, die Lüge — wenn Gott selbst sich als unsre längste Lüge erweist? (sect. 344; XII, 263).

We can see in such passages as this that although Nietzsche rejects Christianity as strongly as ever, he is more conscious than ever of the need for something to take its place, some belief to justify existence. The early aesthetic solution failed him, and now the 'positivism' he has followed from *Menschliches* onwards is being superseded by a system of beliefs which must fill the gap. They are to be his alternative to Christianity—but it is only in later books that they are proclaimed.

5

In these years (1881–2) Nietzsche's cultivation of Chamfort reached its peak. We have seen that he mentions him earlier with gratitude and appreciation, but it is only now that clear signs can be perceived of this reading. In the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche devotes a long section to his character. He praises his knowledge of men, and sees him as dominated by the desire to avenge his mother's fall.[1] This led him to be associated with the Revolution. Mirabeau was his closest friend and disciple. Nietzsche sees Chamfort, with his opinion that laughter was the best antidote to life's troubles[2] as more Italian than French:

> Man kennt die letzten Worte Chamforts: 'Ah, mon ami', sagte er zu Sieyès, 'je m'en vais enfin de ce monde, où il faut que le coeur se brise ou se bronze' — Das sind wirklich nicht Worte eines sterbenden Franzosen! (sect. 95; XII, 121 f.).[3]

It is plainly Chamfort's wit which attracted Nietzsche so much to him, and he reads him with delight at this time.[4] In a note from the year 1882 he quotes him:

> 'Wer mit vierzig Jahren nicht Misanthrop ist, der hat die Menschen nicht geliebt', pflegte Chamfort zu sagen (*Nachlass* XVI, 405).

We have noticed Nietzsche's growing tendency to include among his aphorisms short dialogues of four or five lines—exactly the form used so extensively by Chamfort. This can hardly be coincidence, and it seems likely that Chamfort was a stronger influence here than Pascal. But the congruity of his thought with Nietzsche's is also striking. Chamfort's insistence that the reason corrupts, that the passions are natural and even often a key to truth where the reason fails,[5] his emphasis on the illusion necessary to life,[6] and on the

[1] Chamfort was, of course, illegitimate.

[2] The reference is to Chamfort's *Maxime* 48. Cosima had quoted the passage in a letter to Nietzsche, 13 April, 1871 (*Briefe an Nietzsche* I, 75).

[3] These words are put by Chamfort in another mouth in the *Caractères et Portraits* (*Œuvres*, 1812, II, 142 f.). He may have read them to Sieyès on his death-bed—so at least one judges from Arsène Houssaye's introduction to the 1857 edition.

[4] He refers to both Chamfort and Mirabeau in a letter to Gast, 5 December, 1881, which seems to show that it was the latter who introduced the Frenchman to Nietzsche. Nietzsche read the Chamfort-Mirabeau correspondence as well as the *Pensées*.

[5] L'homme, dans l'état actual de la société, ne paraît plus corrompu par sa raison que par ses passions. Ses passions (j'entends ici celles qui appartiennent à l'homme primitif) ont conservé, dans l'ordre social, le peu de nature qu'on y retrouve encore (*Maximes et Pensées* II, 3).

[6] C'est une belle allégorie, dans la Bible, que cet arbre de la science du bien et du mal qui produit la mort. Cet emblème ne veut-il pas dire que, lorsqu'on a pénétré le fond des choses la perte des illusions amène la mort de l'âme . . . (II, 8; cf. also II, 17).

mixture of motives in human action,[1] his view that society calls for continual deceit on the part of the individual,[2] that it corrupts human nature,[3] that it is in essence a continual battle of opposed individual interests in which vanity is the main driving force[4]—all these opinions have so far become commonplace in Nietzsche's thought that he sees Chamfort as a brother-in-arms in the assault against hypocrisy and dishonesty. But the positive ideal of Chamfort, too, is closely akin to Nietzsche's own. His distinction between pride and vanity,[5] his ideal of the philosopher,[6] his 'natural' morality[7]—all these are essentially in line with Nietzsche's thinking. Above all, the portrait of Chamfort's ideal must have appealed to him:

L'honnête homme, détrompé de toutes les illusions, est l'homme par excellence. Pour peu qu'il ait d'esprit, sa société est très-aimable. Il ne saurait être pédant, ne mettant d'importance à rien. Il est indulgent, parce qu'il se souvient qu'il a eu des illusions, comme ceux qui en sont encore occupés. C'est un effet de son insouciance d'être sûr dans le commerce, de ne se permettre ni redites, ni tracasseries. Si on se les permet à son égard, il les oublie ou les dédaigne. Il doit être plus gai qu'un autre, parce qu'il est constamment en état d'épigramme contre son prochain. Il est donc dans le vrai, et rit des faux pas de ceux qui cherchent à tâtons dans le faux. C'est un homme qui, d'un endroit éclairé, voit dans une chambre obscure les gestes ridicules de ceux qui s'y promènent au hasard. Il brise en riant les faux poids et les fausses mesures qu'on applique aux hommes et aux choses (II, 67 f.).

The affinities between this and Nietzsche's ideal of the 'free spirit' need no pointing out. It cannot be decided how much one should ascribe to Chamfort's influence on Nietzsche's thought, since the ideas he expresses are familiar to his reader from other sources, but

[1] Dans les choses, tout est *affaires mêlées*: dans les hommes, tout est *pièces de rapport*. Au moral et au physique, tout est mixte: rien n'est un, rien n'est pur (II, 25).

[2] Quand on veut plaire dans le monde, il faut se résoudre à se laisser apprendre beaucoup de choses qu'on sait par des gens qui les ignorent (II, 52).

[3] Le genre humain, mauvais de sa nature, est devenu plus mauvais par la société (II, 62).

[4] La société, ce qu'on appelle le monde, n'est que la lutte de mille petits intérêts opposés, une lutte éternelle de toutes les vanités qui se croisent, se choquent, tour-à-tour blessées, humiliées l'une par l'autre, qui expient le lendemain, dans le dégout d'une défaite, le triomphe de la veille (II, 42).

[5] Cf. his careful definitions (II, 23).

[6] Peu de personnes peuvent aimer un philosophe. C'est presque un ennemi publique qu'un homme qui, dans les différentes prétensions des hommes, et dans le mensonge des choses, dit à chaque homme et à chaque chose: Je ne te prends que pour ce que tu es; je ne t'apprécie que ce que tu vaux. Et ce n'est pas une petite entreprise de se faire aimer et estimer avec l'annonce de ce ferme propos (II, 51).

[7] Pour les hommes vraiment honnêtes, et qui ont de certains principes, les commandements de Dieu ont été mis en abrégé sur le frontespice de l'abbaye de Thélème: Fais ce que tu voudras (II, 63 f.).

. . . le principe de toute société est de se rendre justice à soi-même et aux autres. Si l'on doit aimer son prochain comme soi-même, il est au moins aussi juste de s'aimer comme son prochain (II, 64). This is the probable source of Nietzsche's answer to Pascal quoted on p. 81 above (*Morgenröthe*, sect. 79).

it seems likely that this reading has materially reinforced them, particularly since Nietzsche probably saw considerable similarity between his own temperament and life and those of Chamfort.[1]

6

In Chamfort's insistence on the artificiality of society and the 'natural' value of the passions there is something which links him to Rousseau, and Nietzsche's cultivation of the latter has in no way abated. As at this time he attempts for the first time to grapple with Pascal, so with Rousseau. In *Morgenröthe* he tries to answer the problem Rousseau raises for him, and his denunciations of the Frenchman are marked both by greater fury than before and also by a more determined effort to understand his importance. He sums up Rousseau's main belief in a section entitled 'Gegen Rousseau':

Wenn es wahr ist, dass unsere Civilisation etwas Erbärmliches an sich hat: so habt ihr die Wahl, mit Rousseau weiterzuschliessen 'diese erbärmliche Civilisation ist Schuld an unserer *schlechten* Moralität', oder gegen Rousseau zurückzuschliessen 'unsere *gute* Moralität ist Schuld an dieser Erbärmlichkeit der Civilisation. Unsere schwachen unmännlichen gesellschaftlichen Begriffe von gut und böse und die ungeheuere Ueberherrschaft derselben über Leib und Seele haben alle Leiber und alle Seelen endlich schwach gemacht und die selbständigen unabhängigen unbefangenen Menschen, die Pfeiler einer *starken* Civilisation, zerbrochen: wo man der *schlechten* Moralität jetzt noch begegnet, da sieht man die letzten Trümmer dieser Pfeiler!' So stehe denn Paradoxon gegen Paradoxon! Unmöglich kann hier die Wahrheit auf beiden Seiten sein: und ist sie überhaupt auf einer von beiden? Man prüfe! (sect. 163; X, 152).

But, in fact, there is much more in common between the two views than he will admit, for both refer back from the pitiful state of modern civilization to a loss or overlaying of qualities in man which are valuable, by present-day 'morality' (Rousseau calls it 'bad' morality and Nietzsche 'good', but both unite in rejecting it because it has weakened man). Nietzsche feels that Rousseau put the cart before the horse, but the road they are travelling is the same.

Yet in *Morgenröthe* his faith is, like Voltaire's, entirely in 'knowledge' and against Rousseau's thinking. He expresses the 'Socratic' point of view repeatedly:

Die Erkenntniss hat sich in uns zur Leidenschaft verwandelt die vor keinem Opfer erschrickt und im Grunde Nichts fürchtet, als ihr eigenes Erlöschen. . . . Vielleicht

[1] If Andler somewhat exaggerates in placing Chamfort among the 'precursors' of Nietzsche's thought (in the first of his six volumes), nevertheless, his influence is undoubtedly very much more than what has since been called 'une assex mince question de forme' (Bouillier: *La fortune de Chamfort en Allemagne. Rev. de litt. comp.*, 1923).

selbst, dass die Menschheit an dieser Leidenschaft der Erkenntniss zu Grunde geht! — auch dieser Gedanke vermag Nichts über uns! . . . Ja, wir hassen die Barbarei! — wir wollen Alle lieber den Untergang der Menschheit als den Rückgang der Erkenntniss! (sect. 429; X, 282 f.).

But in all this talk of 'barbarism', which Nietzsche equates with Rousseau's 'return to nature', he is nevertheless conscious that Rousseau's thought is very much deeper than such simplifications will allow. It is in this book that he places the significant comparison of Rousseau to Schopenhauer previously noticed (sect. 459; X, 295). And we have seen how he contrasts Plato, Spinoza, Pascal, Rousseau, and Goethe with Kant and Schopenhauer.[1] Here is one more clue to the understanding of his reception of Rousseau. As always, he is interested more in what sort of man he was than in what he said. The instancing of these five thinkers, as whole living men, in opposition to the two Germans (and, one may read between the lines, Voltaire), who were simply logical machines, is doubly significant in view of the homage Nietzsche earlier paid to Schopenhauer and the deep admiration which he retained for him all his life.

7

At this time, at the end of his 'positivistic' period, ushered in with *Menschliches* under the star of Voltaire, we find his interest in the latter gradually declining. In one place (sect. 132; X, 125) he describes the stream of French free-thinkers, all inspired by a 'cult of humanity' which was an attempt to outdo Christianity, and leading from Voltaire to Comte. And in the long discussion of France as the most Christian country, which we have noticed before, he ends by calling attention to the greatness of the French free-thinkers (sect. 192; X, 174; cf. introduction, p. xii above). Here the reference is predominantly to Voltaire. And he links Voltaire to Newton as examples of the spirit of enlightenment, which, he says, the German nineteenth century has constantly opposed (sect. 197; X, 179).[2]

But in the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* he comes close to an explicit denial of Voltaire's main position:

Man hat in den letzten Jahrhunderten die Wissenschaft getördert, theils weil man mit ihr und durch sie Gottes Güte und Weisheit am besten zu verstehen hoffte — das Hauptmotiv in der Seele der grossen Engländer (wie Newton) — theils weil

[1] Cf. p. 83 f. above.

[2] He recommends his sister to read *Mahomet* in Goethe's translation (13 February, 1881; *Ges. Br.* V, 446). It seems probable that he read Voltaire mainly in German. His library contained *Sämtliche Schriften* (a 1786 translation), *Zaire*, *Lettres Choisies* (both in French), and *Der Geist aus Voltaires Schriften* (an 1827 selection).

man an die absolute Nützlichkeit der Erkenntniss glaubte, namentlich an den innersten Verband von Moral, Wissen und Glück — das Hauptmotiv in der Seele der grossen Franzosen (wie Voltaire) —, theils weil man in der Wissenschaft etwas Selbstloses, Harmloses, Sich-selber-Genügendes, wahrhaft Unschuldiges zu haben und zu lieben meinte an dem die bösen Triebe des Menschen überhaupt nicht betheiligt seien — das Hauptmotiv in der Seele Spinozas, der sich als Erkennender göttlich fühlte: — also aus drei Irrthümern! (sect. 37; XII, 72 f.).

Here Nietzsche is emancipated from Voltaire; he has progressed from the Socratic temper of *Menschliches* to the attitude that knowledge is not the final goal in life, which will bear its full fruit only later. In another section Voltaire, and Helvétius are mentioned together, with the implication that they were the 'highest arbiters of taste and wit' (sect. 94; XII, 120 f.). And several times Voltaire is compared to Schopenhauer (e.g. sect. 99; XII, 126 ff.). Nietzsche sees Voltaire now no longer as a free spirit primarily, but as one of the last representatives of that current of culture which has been so marked in France and almost absent elsewhere, which strives to form experience, to govern the subjective sensibility of the individual by the erection of objective canons of taste. We have seen this change in Nietzsche's attitude emerging before, and it is later to overshadow completely the early homage to the free-thinker:

Seinem Charakter 'Stil geben' — eine grosse und seltene Kunst! Sie übt Der, welcher Alles übersieht, was seine Natur an Kräften und Schwächen bietet, und es dann einem künstlerischen Plane einfügt, bis ein Jedes als Kunst und Vernunft erscheint und auch die Schwäche noch das Auge entzückt. Hier ist eine grosse Masse zweiter Natur hinzugetragen worden, dort ein Stück erster Natur abgetragen[1] — beidemal mit langer Uebung und täglicher Arbeit daran. . . . Zuletzt, wenn das Werk vollendet ist, offenbart sich, wie es der Zwang desselben Geschmacks war, der im Grossen und Kleinen herrschte und bildete: ob der Geschmack ein guter oder ein schlechter war bedeutet weniger, als man denkt, — genug, dass es Ein Geschmack ist! . . . Denn Eins ist noth: dass der Mensch seine Zufriedenheit mit sich *erreiche* — sei es nun durch diese oder jene Dichtung und Kunst: nur dann erst ist der Mensch überhaupt erträglich anzusehen (sect. 290; XII, 210 f.).

This brings out very clearly the way Nietzsche's mind is moving. We saw that even in the middle of the 'Socratic' period he was attracted to Voltaire as much by this quality of 'style' as by the ideal of the free-thinker. And now we see him moving steadily to a point where the urge to create and live a style is developing into the emphasis upon individual self-cultivation and the domination of living by imposing the individual stamp upon it, which is to come out so strongly in *Zarathustra*.

[1] A reminiscence of the Pascalian analysis of custom as a 'seconde nature' which Nietzsche had already incorporated into his thinking.

8

During this time there are unimportant references to other French writers in Nietzsche's works and letters, to Charron, Fénelon, Mme de Guyon and Rancé, to Corneille, Racine, Descartes, Mme de Sévigné, La Fontaine, Fontenelle, Ninon de Lenclos, Montesquieu, Helvétius, Sainte-Beuve, Comte, Musset and Doudan. But the only important new members of the circle of those admired by him are Stendhal and Mérimée. It is now that he begins the intensive study of Stendhal. His sister had given him the *Promenades dans Rome* in 1871, but it is unlikely that he cultivated him so early. But from *Morgenröthe* onwards each book pays more attention to him.[1] There is a reference in *Morgenröthe* to beauty as the 'recreation of happiness', which may be an echo of Stendhal's description of it as 'une promesse de bonheur',[2] and Stendhal is mentioned in the *Nachlass* from this time (X, 426; XI, 7). Again, in the long treatment of Chamfort which we have noticed in the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche points out that Chamfort has remained unknown in France, just as Stendhal has:

> ... der vielleicht unter allen Franzosen dieses Jahrhunderts die gedankenreichsten Augen und Ohren gehabt hat. Ist es dass Letzterer (Stendhal) im Grunde zu viel von einem Deutschen und Engländer an sich hatte, um den Parisern noch erträglich zu sein? (sect. 95; XII, 122).

Later in the same book Nietzsche uses the terms 'amour-plaisir' and 'amour-vanité', which he probably borrowed from *De l'Amour* (sect. 123; XII, 154). It looks from Nietzsche's letters at this time[3] as though he discovered Stendhal in 1880, remembered he had already some of his work, sent for it, and meanwhile read all he could lay his hands on. He and Gast read Stendhal continuously together during 1881.[4] But for the full effects of this reading we must wait for later books.

[1] Cf. Förster-Nietzsche, II, 20. To Gast, 7 March, 1887, Nietzsche writes: 'Mit Dostoevsky ist es mir gegangen wie früher mit Stendhal: die zufälligste Berührung, ein Buch, das man in einem Buchladen aufschlägt. Unbekanntschaft bis auf den Namen — und der plötzlich redende Instinkt, hier einem Verwandten begegnet zu sein' (*Ges. Br.* IV, 284). This 'discovery' does not appear to refer to 1871, and it seems likely that Nietzsche is speaking of an occasion much later, in 1879 or 1880, when references to Stendhal begin to appear in the works. His library contained *Histoire de la peinture en Italie, Mémoires d'un touriste, Promenades dans Rome, Rome Naples et Florence, Racine et Shakespeare, Armance* and *Correspondence inédite*.

[2] Cf. *Rome Naples et Florence*, 28 October, and elsewhere.

[3] On 27 March, 1880, he asks his sister to send his two volumes of Stendhal (*Ges. Br.* V, 426), and on 21 March, 1881, he sends Gast copies of the *Vie de Haydn, de Mozart et de Métastase* and the *Vie de Rossini* (*Ges. Br.* IV, 55). He mentions Stendhal in two other letters to Gast (*Ges. Br.* IV, 68, 81), the first plainly implying a reading of *De l'Amour*.

[4] Cf. Bernoulli's description of this period (I, 306 ff.).

Mérimée, too, soon becomes a favourite. Nietzsche quotes his 'Sachez aussi qu'il n'y a rien de plus commun que de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire' in *Menschliches* (sect. 50; VIII, 70), and in the *Nachlass* from the time of *Morgenröthe* (1881) he mentions his admiration for Mérimée's *Don Juan* and for his *Carmen* (XI, 94, 383).[1] In the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* he pays him a great tribute. Of the present time he says:

> . . . so sehe ich nur Giacomo Leopardi, Prosper Mérimée, Ralph Waldo Emerson, und Walter Savage Landor, den Verfasser der 'Imaginary Conversations', als würdig an, Meister der Prosa zu heissen (sect. 92; XII, 120),

and his letters show the depth of his interest.[2] He is attracted to both Stendhal and Mérimée by the light, glittering, 'mediterranean' spirit which breathes through them, and with Gast he cultivated them intensely during 1881. But, as so far with Stendhal, there is no real sign of Mérimée exercising any marked influence on him.

9

This period (1881–2) is a decisive turning-point in Nietzsche's development, and it is marked by a very considerable increase in his French reading. We have considered *Morgenröthe* and the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* together in this chapter, since they plainly show this cardinal change in direction. Yet his mind is developing so rapidly at this time that there is a world of difference between the two books. With *Morgenröthe* the second period of his development has worked itself out. The first reaction to his disillusionment over his youthful ideals, of despair and desperate questioning, cloaked in the mask of sovereign freedom from prejudice, could not satisfy him for long. In *Morgenröthe* it is beginning to be superseded by a much more positive direction which is dominant in the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*.

This latter book may be regarded as a transition between the second and third periods in his work. It contains many of the ideas of later books, though it carries on naturally in the manner of earlier ones. In spirit and in its language it continually points forward, while in content this is only exceptionally so. The peculiar quality here is the sporadic appearance of flashes of the light which is later to shine everywhere, from a background of familiar and by now unexcited thinking. Nietzsche is coming slowly to himself, and there is a

[1] Cf. his letters to Gast 28 November, 5 December, and 8 December, 1881 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 82 ff.), on Mérimée and Bizet.

[2] Cf. those to Marie Baumgartner, 29 March, 6 April, 1879 (*Ges. Br.* I, 439), to Gast, 18 July 1880 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 33).

certain drama in the involuntary self-revelation. And his writing is beginning to lose the blankly dogmatic character of earlier works, and becomes at once more alive and more supple and much more problematic. His prose is taking on that curiously complex polyphony, revealing at once widely different levels of thought and feeling, which is so noticeable later. This is particularly true of the fourth book of the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, which he calls *Sanctus Januarius*, where the Nietzsche of the last period steps out and separates himself from the somewhat undefined personality we have watched so far.

III

THE FINAL WELTANSCHAUUNG (1882–1888)

CHAPTER 7

ZARATHUSTRA

I

DURING the summer of 1882 occurred the abortive attempt to cultivate a disciple in Lou Salomé. Malwida von Meysenbug introduced Nietzsche to her in Rome, where she and her mother were staying. It was hoped that Nietzsche would eventually marry her. At first, indeed, he was delighted with her intelligence and her sympathy with his ideas. But soon he found her independence resisted his claim to complete domination, and she inclined too much to the temper of mind of Rée, and eventually he broke with her, though not without considerable agony of spirit. His letters of this time show only too clearly the agonized brutality of a man whose highest hopes have been shattered. He blames all who had anything to do with the affair, and finally broke definitely with Rée, whose 'perfidy' was revealed in it.[1]

But by then *Zarathustra* was begun. In ten days at the beginning of February 1883 inspiration had come to him,[2] and the first part was written. He has at last succeeded in forming his whole longing and his agony into a powerful vision, crystallized in the figure of the prophet Zarathustra. On the day this 'son' of his was completed he received the news of Wagner's death, and it seemed to him that this too was only another symbol of the lifting of the incubus which had weighed him down so long. At last he was free, not only of those loyalties which had resisted all his frantic attempts to destroy them with the acid of doubt, but also of the enemy within himself, the desperate questioning and uncertainty which had prevented his faltering steps from breaking into a joyful dance. In the summer he returned to Sils Maria from a visit to Rome, and in another burst of creativity the second part of the book was written. This too was a 'revelation', completed also in ten days, though it contains some sections written earlier in Rome. And still the spirit had not had its say. In the autumn he was at Nice again, and the third part, the

[1] Cf. his letters and rough drafts for letters to his sister, to Rée, and to Lou herself, of September and October, 1882 (*Ges. Br.* V, 495 ff.), and later letters to Rée's brother and Nietzsche's sister, of July and August, 1883 (*Ges. Br.* V, 524 ff.). The last of these is a draft to Lou's mother, August 1883 (*Ges. Br.* V, 538).

[2] See the famous description of inspiration in *Ecce Homo*, apropos of this book (XXI, 251 f.).

central mystery of the whole, where the idea of Eternal Recurrence was at last expressed, was completed, in the early days of 1884. There the work stopped for most of the next year; plans for three more parts were made and some partially carried out. The fourth part as we have it, so different in manner from the first three, was written during the autumn of 1884 and finished in February of the next year. Some idea of the turmoil in Nietzsche's mind during these two years of high stress broken by four bouts of inspired creativity can be gained from his letters. Always the same note is sounded—he is overwhelmed, overjoyed, a little terrified at the magnitude of the event which has thrust itself upon him. He is thankful that his own direction is henceforward clearly set, and that the time of his tribulation is over; he is conscious that his message will be scorned and repudiated, if heeded at all; he is convinced that this hard-won fruit of his anxious waiting is of immense importance, but is not surprised at the indifference or censure of most of his friends. His time, he knows, will come, and meanwhile his personal suffering is part of his martyrdom.[1]

The message so presumptuously heralded, so exuberantly and so reverently transmitted, is in essentials not new. The ideas of this book are fundamentally the direct developments of conceptions long familiar in Nietzsche. Nevertheless, the term 'revelation' is not misplaced, for all the dross has been purged away and the whole light of Nietzsche's mind shines alone, unhindered by the shadowy accumulations of outworn older conceptions which had previously obscured it. This is the main importance of the creation of the symbolic figure of the prophet—the concentration of the light on him throughout allows Nietzsche to relate all his previous thinking to an unshakable central point of reference. Only in relation to him do the various conceptions which appear fall into place, and what was before a heterogeneous and contradictory variety of ideas is now seen to be a complex of emotional and intellectual effort pointing in one simply-conceived direction. Zarathustra resolves the antinomies and transcends the polarity of Nietzsche's earlier thinking. The advance is apparent, firstly, in the new consistency and coherence of this book compared with previous ones; and secondly, on a deeper level, in the success of the attempt to do with symbols what Nietzsche had tried and failed to do purely intellectually—to create a single

[1] Cf. letters to Gersdorff, 28 July, 1883 (*Ges. Br.* I, 458), to Rohde, 22 February, 1884 (*Ges. Br.* II, 574), to Malwida, February 1884 (*Ges. Br* III, 616), to Peter Gast, 17 April, 1883 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 153), to his sister, August 1883 (*Ges. Br.* V, 540), etc.

significance out of chaos, to 'give birth to a dancing star', as he put it in the book.

God is dead, man is alone. But man is not the end. 'Der Übermensch ist der Sinn der Erde. Euer Wille sage: der Übermensch sei der Sinn der Erde' (*Zarathustras Vorrede* XIII, 9, and repeated several times later). This is not two assertions, but one. The human will alone must create its values for itself, and the ultimate creative force is that highest desire within the individual which longs to realize the Superman. The latter, then, is not some future development in man, but a potentiality given in our human make-up which it is our duty to fulfill. In the first part of the book Zarathustra rejects other ideals, basing his faith on that 'loyalty to the earth' which is his fundamental exhortation. And he emphasizes the cardinal fact that a certain admixture of bad is in all good, as death is in life, that the creative will can, and must, transform the one into the other. 'Only from the grave can there be resurrection' (*Das Grablied* XIII, 145). Zarathustra's ideal involves a continual obedience as well as a sovereign commanding (*Von Krieg und Kriegsvolke* XIII, 57). After dismissing the other ideals which have been proposed, Zarathustra makes his own call for a genuinely creative life, that is to say, the free submission of the personality to the Superman in itself, to the ideal which alone gives significance to life (*Vom Wege des Schaffenden* XIII, 78 ff.). The ideal of 'schenkende Tugend' is so far not elaborated, but it runs through the whole of the first part, where the problem is outlined and previous solutions discarded.

The second part opens with a reiteration that if God is dead, then man must now set himself his own goal, and this can be none other than the Superman. And here there is an attack on Christianity and priests, though Nietzsche feels himself closely related to them (*Von den Priestern* XIII, 115 ff.). Virtue is in no sense an external standard against which actions can be measured, but is the creation of the agent. Nietzsche's extreme 'personalism' is here given full expression. But the section *Von der Selbstüberwindung* shows how far his doctrine is from the egoistic anarchism with which he was reproached (XIII, 146 f.). And towards the end of this part, in the section *Von der Erlösung*, the stage is set for the enunciation of the mystery of Eternal Recurrence. The problem is to break the dependence of the will on time (XIII, 182 f.). Zarathustra comes to the point of announcing his final penetration, but breaks off, and this part ends with the 'stillste Stunde' and the thought that 'thoughts that come on doves' feet lead the world' (XIII, 193).

The section *Von Gesicht und Räthsel* at the beginning of the third part, reveals the secret of Recurrence. Death itself can be conquered by the courage which dares to say: 'War das das Leben? Wohlan, Noch Ein Mal!' (XIII, 202). And immediately Zarathustra confronts the dwarf who clings to him with this new truth. The idea of Recurrence, as we have seen, is already three years old, but Nietzsche has held it up until now to give it the shattering effect of a revelation which comes at the moment of Zarathustra's deepest despair and turns all his doubts to triumphant certainty. It has been argued that the conception is directly at variance with all the rest of Nietzsche's thinking, that the 'cyclic' nature of the universe makes nonsense of the whole idea of culture, of the Superman as an ideal for human striving.[1] And the idea of Eternal Recurrence has been considered simply as a repetition of the Pythagorean doctrine of the 'Great Year', which Nietzsche took from the pre-Socratic philosophers and attempted to claim as his own by denying his indebtedness.[2] Both these views do less than justice to this central conception, which can best perhaps be regarded from three different viewpoints. In the first place the idea that we come back again and again, not to a life precisely like this one, but to *this very life*, is a powerful symbol of the quality of eternity which is in every moment of life, and, in passing, is the only possibility of escaping the limitations of a purely humanistic 'life for life's sake' attitude, which the denial of God as a transcendental being would otherwise involve. Nietzsche's view is that *all* life, the highest and the lowest, the noble and the petty, the good and the evil, is eternal whether we will or no. So that, secondly, we may see in the idea an extreme expression of the consciousness of our ultimate responsibility as human beings, from which there is no escape. We must answer for every moment of our lives, by re-enacting it in eternity. And lastly, a point which Nietzsche was at pains to underline in later books, the doctrine of Recurrence is a touchstone on which each will judge himself and redeem or condemn himself by his reception of it. For if he is 'strong' and can 'bear the thought' he will glory in this eternity and be conscious always of the irrevocability of all he does. If he is 'weak' the idea that he must live over and over again his poor and miserable life will break him. Thus can be separated the 'lords' from the 'slaves'. (The further extension, which Nietzsche formulates later, that the weak will be broken *and*

[1] Cf. for instance Barker Fairley: *Nietzsche and the Poetic Impulse* (*John Rylands Bulletin*, 1935): 'Between its two leading ideas—that of the superman and that of eternal recurrence—there is not a reconciling syllable in the whole work' (p. 356).

[2] This is the view taken by Knight: *Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche*, 1933.

will die out, is, of course, not tenable. Such 'selection' is possible only *within* history, not in eternity). Seen from these three directions at once, the doctrine can be regarded, not as a simple repetition of the crude early Greek conception, but as a genuinely original idea, which is central to Nietzsche's whole attitude.[1] In the light of this revelation Zarathustra can formulate his only moral law: 'Do what you will. But first be such a man as *can* will' (*Von der verkleinernden Tugend* XIII, 222). In the long section *Von alten und neuen Tafeln* (XIII, 252 ff.) the whole of his teaching is summed up in preparation for the later action. And this part ends with an ecstatic hymn to eternity (XIII, 294).

The last part of the book is sharply marked off from the first three by its somewhat looser construction and by its substitution of allegory for the intense symbolic action hitherto. More characters are introduced, all finding their way to Zarathustra's cave, where they are finally assembled. The magician (Wagner) sings his songs, and all bow down in the end and worship an ass. This part is the fruit of Nietzsche's anxious questioning whether in fact the sustained denial of God which he has carried through up to now is really possible—whether man can carry the awful burden of transcendence and redemption which he would put upon him. Zarathustra's ecstasy in *Mittags* (XIII, 346) is mystical, but essentially problematic. And the others' adoration of the donkey shows him how far he is from those he had thought his disciples. The wanderer speaks the truth to him: 'The old God lives again, Zarathustra, say what you will' (*Das Eselfest* XIII, 412). Zarathustra is left once more alone, his work not done, and at the end of the book he steps out in hope to continue it. Nietzsche planned other parts to the book, several sketches show Zarathustra triumphant, his message accepted and applied by men, and himself dying at the bliss of such a moment. This was never carried out, and the fact lends strength to the supposition that *Zarathustra*, especially the fourth part, which shows the prophet's unbroken courage after dire and tragic failure, is in a very deep sense a confession on Nietzsche's part, even an account of his own deepest experiences, as well as a symbolic presentation of his ideas.

2

At this stage in his development Nietzsche is coming to grips with the problems raised for him by Pascal. He is, so to speak, deliberately placing his thought in the context of atheism, as Pascal

[1] For further discussion of the doctrine, see pp. 107 ff. below.

does in the first half of the *Pensées*. God has been killed. In one place it is said that He was strangled by His pity for men. In another we have this:

> Ich erkenne dich wohl, sprach er mit einer erzenen Stimme: *Du bist der Mörder Gottes*! Lass mich gehen.
>
> Du *ertrugst* Den nicht, der *dich* sah . . . der dich immer und durch und durch sah, du hässlichster Mensch! Du nahmst Rache an diesem Zeugen! (*Der hässlichste Mensch* XIII, 333).

But Nietzsche is conscious nevertheless that our lives have a transcendental significance. We cannot 'kill the witness' so easily:

> 'Schlimm genug, antwortete der Wanderer und Schatten, du hast Recht, aber was kann ich dafür? Der alte Gott lebt wieder, oh Zarathustra, du magst reden, was du willst. Der hässlichste Mensch ist an allem Schuld: der hat ihn wieder aufgeweckt. Und wenn er sagt, dass er ihn einst getödtet habe: *Tod* ist bei Göttern immer nur ein Vorurtheil! (*Das Eselfest* XIII, 397).

The conception of the Superman overshadows everything else in the book. That the human personality is a battleground in which a continual struggle for self-emancipation is carried out, that the 'free spirit' is one who has freed himself from all that is not essentially personal to him—this has now been transformed into an explicit denial of worth in the human spirit in so far as it is only human. 'Der Mensch ist etwas, das überwunden werden muss'. Here Nietzsche is rejecting precisely what Pascal rejects with his 'le moi est haissable'. Both men see that man considered without reference to any transcendental power is a poor, weak and miserable being, and Nietzsche's Superman, which is a projection from within the individual, is his attempt to overcome the limitations of the purely human situation without calling upon non-human power. The two answers—Christianity and the Superman—are poles apart, but the essential problem raised by the fact that man is 'fallen' and must be 'redeemed'—this is as present to Nietzsche as to Pascal.

It is apparent that Nietzsche is deeply occupied in this book with the problem of God's love:

> Wer ihn als einen Gott der Liebe preist, denkt nicht hoch genug von der Liebe selber. Wollte dieser Gott nicht auch Richter sein? Aber der Liebende liebt jenseits von Lohn und Vergeltung (*Ausser Dienst* XIII, 329).
>
> Und er selber liebte nur nicht genug: sonst hätte er weniger gezürnt, dass man ihn nicht liebe. Alle grosse Liebe *will* nicht Liebe — die will mehr (*Vom höheren Menschen* XIII, 371).

And in a sketch from this time he says: 'Was aus Liebe gethan wird, das ist *nicht* moralisch, sondern religiös' (*Nachlass* XIV, 48), which

seems to show that he is aware of something at least in us which has absolute significance. He says, too, in an analysis of mysticism:

> Wessen Gedanke nur *ein* Mal die Brücke zur Mystik überschritten hat, kommt nicht davon ohne ein Stigma auf allen seinen Gedanken. . . . Wenn Scepsis und Sehnsucht sich begatten, entsteht die Mystik (*Nachlass* XIV, 22),

which is applicable equally to Pascal and to himself. He characterizes the Frenchman as a 'romantic pessimist', like Vigny, Dostoevsky or Leopardi (*Nachlass* XIV, 328), and he opposes him to the Greeks:

> Stoicismus wäre in einer moralisch *aufgeklärten* Welt gar nicht möglich gewesen —Jedes Wort von Balthasar Gracian oder La Rochefoucauld oder Pascal hat den *ganzen griechischen Geschmack gegen sich* (*Nachlass* XIV, 261).

3

But in this work, where the main lines of his final position are clear, Nietzsche is answering Pascal's problem on lines which are fundamentally given by Rousseau. Naturally in *Zarathustra* itself there is no overt reference to Rousseau, but that there is considerable common ground between them is clearly seen when we consider their respective conceptions of human personality. Rousseau opposed the idea of the 'philosophes', in seeking the final springs of conduct and of belief at a level below that of logic, or rational calculation or argument, and below that of prejudice or custom or unconsciously accepted 'bienséance'. He investigates the functioning of what he calls 'conscience' in determining our thinking and actions:

> On nous dit que la conscience est l'ouvrage des préjugés; cependant je sais par mon expérience qu'elle s'obstine à suivre l'ordre de la nature contre toutes les lois des hommes (*Profession de Foi. Émile. Œuvres* II, 237).

And he emphasizes the fundamentally mysterious nature of the ultimate self, which controls us and yet defies our attempts to provide a rational account of it:

> . . . Nous nous ignorons nous-mêmes: nous ne connaissons ni notre nature ni notre principe actif; à peine savons-nous si l'homme est un être simple ou composé; des mystères impénétrables nous environnent de toutes parts; ils sont au-dessus de la région sensible; pour les percer nous croyons avoir de l'intelligence, et nous n'avons que de l'imagination. Chacun se fraye à travers ce monde imaginaire une route qu'il croit la bonne; nul ne peut savoir si la sienne mène au but. Cependant nous voulons tout pénétrer, tout connaître (ibid., *Œuvres* II, 238 f.).

But 'conscience', he thinks, is our guide in the wilderness:

> . . . elle est le vrai guide de l'homme: elle est à l'âme ce que l'instinct est au corps (ibid., *Œuvres* II, 258).

And here we can see how close this analysis is to Nietzsche's emphasis on the unconscious instinctive nature of the core of the personality. When Nietzsche calls on men to cultivate and follow the will, he is concerned, like Rousseau, to discover the secret of the self, to penetrate below the conventional appeal to rules, to habits, and customs and ethical 'duties', and to find a principle of action and of thought which is truly personal and truly real for that reason. He lays the emphasis on the 'will', seen not so much as conscious willing of an object, but as an unconscious instinct of assertion which is finally indefinable and not logically grounded in rational thought. The will creates value, as Rousseau's 'conscience' is the basis of truth. And both these things are our deepest 'nature'. The two conceptions are in no way identical, but they are rooted in the examination of the same problem and they have in common a repudiation of conventional 'rational' attempts to base action and thought on logical processes. Rousseau's pæan of joy and praise indeed again describes the 'conscience' as an instinct:

> Conscience! conscience! instinct divin: immortelle et céleste voix; guide assuré d'un être ignorant et borné, mais intelligent et libre; juge infaillible du bien et du mal; qui rends l'homme semblable à Dieu, c'est toi qui fais l'excellence de sa nature et la moralité de ses actions; sans toi, je ne sens rien en moi qui m'élève au-dessus des bêtes, que le triste privilège de m'égarer d'erreurs en erreurs, à l'aide d'un entendement sans règle et d'une raison sans principes (ibid., *Œuvres* II, 262).

The same terms are used repeatedly by Nietzsche in speaking of the creative will:

> Ja, dies Ich und des Ichs Widerspruch und Wirrsal redet noch am redlichsten von seinem Sein, dieses schaffende, wollende, werthende Ich, welches das Maass und der Werth der Dinge ist (*Von den Hinterweltlern* XIII, 33 f.).

And he is never tired of drawing attention to the fundamental mystery and contradiction of the personality, the source of good and evil, and the final interrelation of the two:

> Aber der Wind, den wir nicht sehen, der quält und biegt ihn, wohin er will. Wir werden am schlimmsten von unsichtbaren Händen gebogen und gequält.... Je mehr er hinauf in die Höhe und Helle will, um so stärker streben seine Wurzeln erdwärts, abwärts, ins Dunkle, Tiefe — ins Böse (*Vom Baum am Berge* XIII, 48).

This description of the tree is Nietzsche's parable for the human personality. And Rousseau, too, has a lively sense of the play of passions in affecting our judgment and of the rôle of the intellect, not primarily as an instrument of speculation but as the servant of our desires:

> Quoiqu'en disent les moralistes, l'entendement humain doit beaucoup aux

passions, qui, d'un commun aveu, lui doivent beaucoup aussi; c'est par leur activité que notre raison se perfectionne; nous ne cherchons à connaître que parce que nous désirons de jouir (*Discours de l'Inégalité. Œuvres* I, 90).

Rousseau does not develop this pragmatic strain of thinking.[1] Nietzsche makes it a fundamental part of his doctrine of personality:

'Ich' sagst du und bist stolz auf dies Wort. Aber das Grössere ist — woran du nicht glauben willst — dein Leib und seine grosse Vernunft: die sagt nicht ich aber thut ich. . . .

Immer horcht das Selbst und sucht: es vergleicht, bezwingt, erobert, zerstört. Es herrscht und ist auch des Ichs Beherrscher. Das Selbst sagt zum Ich: 'hier fühle Schmerz!' Und da leidet es und denkt nach, wie es nicht mehr leide — und dazu eben *soll* es denken!

Das Selbst sagt zum Ich: 'hier fühle Lust!' Da freut es sich und denkt nach, wie es noch oft sich freue — und dazu eben *soll* es denken! (*Von den Verachtern des Leibes* XIII, 38 f.).

It may be fanciful to see here a parallel to Rousseau's separation of 'l'amour de soi' and 'l'amour propre',[2] but certainly Nietzsche and he are at one in seeing that much of our so-called 'thinking' is no more than a reflection of unconscious, largely physical, pain and pleasure.[3] And Rousseau, in his emphasis on the 'natural' egoism in man, frequently uses terms which are reminiscent of Nietzsche's much more extreme formulations:

La source de nos passions, l'origine et le principe, la seule qui nait avec l'homme et ne le quitte jamais tant qu'il vit, est l'amour de soi; la passion primitive, innée, antérieure à toute autre, et dont toutes les autres ne sont en un sens que des modifications. En ce sens, toutes, si l'on veut, sont naturelles. Mais la plupart de ces modifications ont des causes étrangères, sans lesquelles elles n'auraient jamais lieu; et ces mêmes modifications, loin de nous être advantageuses, nous sont nuisibles; elles changent le premier objet et vont contre leur principe; c'est alors que l'homme se trouve hors de la nature et se met en contradiction avec soi (*Émile, Œuvres* II, 182 f.).

Here Rousseau's doctrine of following the most secret core of the personality is fundamentally egoistic. Without identifying 'amour de soi' with Nietzsche's 'will', we can, nevertheless, see how such a strain of thought will lead to Nietzsche's more extreme view:

Ach, dass ihr mein Wort verstündet: 'Thut immerhin, was ihr wollt — aber seid

[1] Though he does permit himself to say: 'Il ne s'agit pas de savoir ce qui est, mais seulement ce qui est utile' (*Émile Œuvres* II, 37).

[2] Rousseau carefully dissociates 'l'amour de soi-même', a natural urge to self-preservation of which he approves, from 'l'amour propre', which is born of society and causes all human evils (*Discours de L'Inégalité, Œuvres* I, 149).

[3] Schopenhauer, of course, puts the view that the function of the intellect is to serve desire and only from the 'surplus' of intellect left over when that task is done does artistic and speculative activity arise. This is where Nietzsche no doubt first found the idea, but his reading of the French writers, including Rousseau, has enormously reinforced it.

erst solche, *die wollen können*! Liebt immerhin euren Nächsten gleich euch — aber seid erst solche, *die sich selber lieben*!' (*Von der verkleinernden Tugend* XIII, 221 f.).

And Rousseau's conception is based, like Nietzsche's, on the view that life is essentially action, not knowledge or existence or enjoyment:

> Vivre, ce n'est pas respirer, c'est agir, c'est faire usage de nos organes, de nos sens, de nos facultés, de toutes les parties de nous-mêmes qui nous donnent le sentiment de notre existence. L'homme qui a le plus vécu n'est pas celui qui a compté le plus d'années, mais celui qui a le plus senti la vie (*Émile*, *Œuvres* II, 9).[1]

This only requires the addition of the conception of life as will to power to bring it completely into line with Nietzsche's deepest convictions. Rousseau's teaching that virtue can be found only in a being whose nature is weak but whose will is strong, is paralleled by Nietzsche's emphasis on virtue as 'Selbstüberwindung'. And although Nietzsche's doctrine of the transformation of evil into good by the will[2] is not in any degree in Rousseau, they do both show the same combination of an egoistic ethic with a strict consciousness of the necessity of continually conquering oneself as a prerequisite for the domination of life.

In the *Nachlass* from the time of *Zarathustra* (1883–5) there are several mentions of Rousseau. One shows how much he is present to Nietzsche, how much he imposes himself upon him, despite Nietzsche's bitter rejection of so much of his teaching with scorn and contempt:

> Es giebt Personen, welche Jedermann zu einem Ja oder Nein in Bezug auf ihre ganze Person nöthigen möchten: zu ihnen gehörte Rousseau: ihr Leiden am Grössenwahn stammt aus ihrem Misstrauen gegen sich (*Nachlass* XIV, 65).

Whether Nietzsche's psychological insight here is correct or not, we may certainly say that Rousseau is, in fact, big enough to force him to a 'Ja oder Nein', and the fact that his reply is almost always explicitly and emphatically the latter should not blind us to the elements in Rousseau which he has absorbed into himself.

[1] Cf. also: La seule raison n'est point active: elle retient quelquefois, rarement elle excite, et jamais elle n'a rien fait de grand. Toujours raisonner est la manière des petits esprits. Les âmes fortes ont bien un autre langage, c'est par ce langage qu'on persuade et qu'on fait agir (*Émile*: *Œuvres* II, 294). Nietzsche would have been in complete agreement. He had read something very like this in Pascal (cf. *Pensées* 267, 99, 282, etc.).

[2] Und wer ein Schöpfer sein muss im Guten und Bösen: Wahrlich der muss ein Vernichter erst sein und Werthe zerbrechen. Also gehört das höchste Böse zur höchsten Güte: diese aber ist die schöpferische (*Von der Selbstüberwindung* XIII, 149).

4

As with Rousseau, so with Montaigne. Nietzsche's refusal to recognize any transcendental values leads him to a solution of the problem of human nature which does not go beyond the limits set by the individual personality itself, and here he is following Montaigne's lead:

Ach meine Freunde! Dass *euer* Selbst in der Handlung sei, wie die Mutter im Kinde ist: das sei mir *euer* Wort von Tugend (*Von den Tugendhaften* XIII, 122).

'Das — ist nun *mein* Weg, wo ist der eure?' So antwortete ich Denen, welche mir 'nach dem Wege' fragten. *Den* Weg nämlich — den giebt es nicht (*Vom Geist der Schwere* XIII, 251).

Montaigne shows the same insistence that each man must choose his own way, must discover his own truths for himself, that living is valuable only in so far as we imprint upon it a personal stamp which is born of our own thought and feeling. The last words of the *Essais* contain both the pride and the resignation of this attitude:

C'est une absolue perfection, et comme divine, de sçavoir jouyr loiallement de son estre. Nous cherchons d'autres conditions, pour n'entendre l'usage des nostres, et sortons hors de nous, pour ne sçavoir quel il y fait. Si avons nous beau monter sur des eschasses, car sur des eschasses encore faut-il marcher de nos jambes. Et au plus eslevé throne du monde si ne sommes assis que sur nostre cul (III, 13, p. 666 f.).

The will to be oneself, or, as Nietzsche put it, to become what one is, is at the bottom of the *Essais* as well as of *Zarathustra*.

Ich bin Zarathustra, der Gottlose: ich koche mir noch jeden Zufall in *meinem* Topfe. Und erst wenn er da gar gekocht ist, heisse ich ihn willkommen, als *meine* Speise. Und wahrlich, mancher Zufall kam herrisch zu mir; aber herrischer noch sprach zu ihm mein *Wille* — da lag er schon bittend auf den Knieen (*Von der verkleinernden Tugend* XIII, 221).

The old problem of the baffling inexplicability of the human personality is solved in the same way:

Der Mensch ist schwer zu entdecken und sich selber noch am schwersten; oft lügt der Geist über die Seele. Also schafft es der Geist der Schwere.

Der aber hat sich selber entdeckt, welcher spricht: Das ist *mein* Gutes und Böses: damit hat er den Maulwurf und Zwerg stumm gemacht, welcher spricht: 'Allen gut, Allen bös' (*Vom Geist der Schwere* XIII, 249 f.).

The way of introspection which is purely intellectual, in fact, is barren and fruitless. One cannot understand oneself. But the spirit which can create value for itself in living has penetrated beyond the 'schemes of apprehension' in which the logical mind works, and has discovered itself. In this formulation Nietzsche has combined what

were two separate parts of his belief—the doubt about the efficacy of intellectual processes, and the conviction that moral values, like all values ultimately, must be created anew by the personality in its constant battle with itself. Both these conceptions are fundamental to Montaigne's thought, and we have followed them in Nietzsche until here they are complementary.

It is permissible to see in the 'Geist der Schwere' a poetic image of the Kantian categories, or of the scheme of space and time through which our intellect works and to which it is bound. It is, of course, much more—it represents all the qualities of impermanence and unfruitfulness in life, the drag of habit, the mechanical action of living, the compromises and half-truths to which we are forced—all that Montaigne and Nietzsche both regard as shackles from which we must free ourselves. That the human spirit must free itself from the bonds of time—this is the fundamental belief of Nietzsche as of Montaigne, who felt just as strongly this contradiction at the root of the human personality, and suggested a solution:

> Le monde n'est qu'une branloire perenne. Toutes choses y branlent sans cesse: la terre, les rochers du Caucase, les pyramides d'Aegypte, et du branle public et du leur. La constance mesme n'est autre chose qu'un branle plus languissant. Je ne puis assurer mon object. Il va troublé et chancelant, d'une yvresse naturelle. Je le prends en ce point, comme il est, en l'instant que je m'amuse à luy. Je ne peinds pas l'estre, je peinds le passage: non un passage d'aage en autre, ou, comme dict le peuple, de sept en sept ans, mais de jour en jour, de minute en minute (III, 2, p. 39). (And speaking of this life) . . . je la jouys au double des autres, car la mesure en la jouyssance dépend du plus ou moins d'application que nous y prestons. Principallement à cette heure que j'aperçoy la mienne si briefve en temps, je la veux estendre en pois; je veux arrester la promptitude de sa fuite par la promptitude de ma sesie, et par la vigueur de l'usage compenser la hastivité de son escoulement: à mesure que la possession du vivre est plus courte, il me faut la rendre plus profonde et plus pleine (III, 13, p. 658 f.).

The doctrine of Recurrence is Nietzsche's answer to the same problem. On the one hand, it is the only possible alternative to a belief in personal immortality, or some sort of Zoroastrian belief in reincarnation, and on the other it allows the preservation of his world-view against any transcendental importations. As Nietzsche himself says, it is the nearest approach of a world of 'becoming' to a world of 'being'. It is noteworthy that in elaborating this doctrine Nietzsche does not follow Goethe, who, faced with a similar intuition, attempted to give 'Dauer' to the moment. It is not that the highest, fullest moment in life is eternal, but the flux of life itself is so, in its small and petty manifestations as much as in its peak moments and

achievements. Not the 'estre', however deeply-felt and significant, but the 'passage'. This is the sense of the 'recurrence even of the smallest things'. All life, not only events in it, is recurrent. This is an attitude very much nearer Montaigne's 'promptitude de ma sesie' than to any system which regards eternity as a quality which can be conferred by living on certain events, feelings, thoughts, in proportion as the personality is fully expressed in them. Nietzsche's answer to the problem which he and Montaigne both face is in some degree a poetic statement of an attitude very similar to his master's, and it is fair to assume that his reading of the *Essais* helped to form it.

5

This doctrine of Eternal Recurrence is, of course, an elaboration of the Pythagorean teaching of the 'Great Year'. But an impressive list of more or less contemporary sources can also be drawn up. Andler mentions, apart from the Greeks (Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraclitus and the Stoics), Schopenhauer's very similar speculations,[1] the French writers Gobineau, Blanqui and Le Bon, the doctrines of the Brahmans and the Manu, which Nietzsche doubtless knew through Deussen, and of Buddhism.[2] R. M. Meyer quotes a parallel speculation of Bahnsen's: *Zur Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1872.[3] Others add the speech by Naegeli on *Die Grenzen der Wissenschaft*, given in 1878, which sets out the scientific 'proof' of recurrence later used by Nietzsche. And the same idea has been seen in Guyau's *Vers d'un philosophe* of 1881.[4] Some of these were probably known to Nietzsche.[5] Certainly Schopenhauer's speculation must have impressed itself on him early in life. Whether he was familiar with the others, particularly with Blanqui's *L'éternité des astres* (1872) and with Le Bon's *L'homme et les sociétés* (1881), is not fundamentally important, since we know he was acquainted with the recurrence-idea at an earlier date. The main significance of this fairly large number of contemporary 'sources' is not that any one or any combina-

[1] *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*Grossherzog Wilhelm Ernst Ausgabe*), p. 370 ff. This is the passage quoted by Andler. An even nearer parallel is p. 1,272. This latter passage, not mentioned by Andler, gives a 'scientific' argument for recurrence like Nietzsche's.

[2] Andler III, 228 ff. (the Greeks); I, 126 (Schopenhauer); III, 235 ff. (the French); III, 241 ff. (the Brahmans, Manu, Buddhism).

[3] R. M. Meyer: *Nietzsche*, p. 464.

[4] E. Seillière: *Apollon ou Dionysos*, 1905, p. 271. A. Fouillée: *Nietzsche et l'immoralisme*, 1902, p. 208 ff.

[5] Though Bernoulli (I, 318 ff.) argues that neither of the two most important, Le Bon and Blanqui, were known to Nietzsche at this time.

tion of them influenced Nietzsche, but that the idea was 'in the air' during the '70's and '80's, so that his own speculation is a reflection of an anonymous contemporary trend. And the originality of his thought, which lies in his *use* of the doctrine and not in the doctrine itself, is quite unimpaired. None of the writers mentioned is referred to by Nietzsche in his works or letters, except Gobineau, with whom he first became acquainted in 1877,[1] and, of course, Schopenhauer. In 1883 an article on Gobineau appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter* and Nietzsche then re-read his works.[2] He refers to him only much later (October and December 1888) in letters, and it is reasonable to assume that Gobineau played no part in the evolution of his thought until after the time of *Zarathustra*, when his theories, as we shall see, did have some influence on Nietzsche's attitude.

6

In *Zarathustra* his most fruitful guide in his psychological investigations is still La Rochefoucauld. Here Nietzsche has deepened his previous distinction between the apparent and the real self, and now uses the terms 'Selbst' and 'Ich': the first, to signify the physiological impulses which are unconscious but which dominate our feeling and action; the second, that conscious, *willing* side of the personality, which thinks and judges. We have already quoted the passage in which Nietzsche pictures the 'Selbst' dictating to the 'Ich' what it shall feel, and shows that the latter's intellectual judgments are in fact only for the purpose of assuring the well-being of the 'Selbst'. This view, which borders on pragmatism, sees in the intellect the servant of the passions, of that unconscious undercurrent which in reality determines our thinking and action. We have noticed the same view, though not in these terms, in La Rochefoucauld:

> La force et la faiblesse de l'esprit sont mal nommées; elles ne sont en effet que la bonne ou la mauvaise disposition des organes du corps (44).

And Nietzsche's description of the 'Selbst' recalls La Rochefoucauld's of 'amour-propre' in the long suppressed *maxime* on it.

We have seen also in Nietzsche at this time a profound perception

[1] Förster-Nietzsche, II, 866.

[2] Seillière (pp. 314 ff.) argues that Gobineau made clear what was previously chaotic in Nietzsche's thought. The lamentation of the Kings in *Zarathustra* IV, he says, 'sent la lecture de Gobineau' (p. 319). Later he says: 'Nietzsche a conçu le surhomme comme génie romantique jusqu'en 1875, comme exemplaire pseudo-darwinien d'une surespèce problématique de 1880 à 1884. Il tend après cette date à introduire la notion de race dans son idéal d'avenir' (p. 354). In his anxiety to fit Nietzsche in to the tradition of racial imperialism he goes much too far with this last phrase.

of La Rochefoucauld's view that vice and virtue are so closely connected that one can often not separate them. In Nietzsche's words:

Aus deinen Giften brautest du dir deinen Balsam,[1] deine Kuh Trübsal melktest du — nun trinkst du dir süsse Milch ihres Euters. Und nichts Böses wächst mehr fürderhin aus dir, es sei denn das Böse, das aus dem Kampfe deiner Tugenden wächst (*Von den Freuden- und Leidenschaften* XIII, 40).

And Nietzsche is careful to separate the real motives of action from those imputed or believed:

Aber ein Anderes ist der Gedanke: ein Anderes die Tat, ein Anderes das Bild der Tat. Das Rad des Grundes rollt nicht zwischen ihnen (*Vom bleichen Verbrecher* XIII, 43).[2]

Many of the paragraphs of *Zarathustra* are akin to La Rochefoucauld's *maximes* in their method of expression:

Bist du ein Sklave? So kannst du nicht Freund sein. Bist du ein Tyrann? So kannst du nicht Freunde haben (*Vom Freunde* XIII, 70).

Der Eine geht zum Nächsten, weil er sich sucht, und der Andere, weil er sich verlieren möchte (*Von der Nächstenliebe* XIII, 75).[3]

While the whole book is full of sentiments which show all the old insistence on penetrating behind appearances and discovering the bad elements in 'good' actions and the good in what is 'bad':

Und oft will man mit der Liebe nur den Neid überspringen. Und oft greift man an und macht einen Feind, um zu verbergen, dass man angreifbar ist (*Vom Freunde* XIII, 68).

Und auch das lernte ich unter ihnen; der Lobende stellt sich, als gebe er zurück. In Wahrheit aber will er mehr beschenkt sein (*Von der verkleinernden Tugend* XIII, 218).

This latter phrase is simply a restatement of several of La Rochefoucauld's *maximes* on praise, such as:

Le refus de la louange est un désir d'être loué deux fois (149) (cf. also *Maximes* 144, 146, 158, 228, etc.).

In the *Nachlass* from this time (1883–5), too, there are plain signs of the reading of the Frenchman. In sentences like these:

Moral ist eine Wichtigthuerei des Menschen in der Natur. Die beste Maske die wir tragen ist unser eigenes Gesicht (XIV, 23, 76)

we can see the latter's idea that we are all play-acting in our moral

[1] He uses La Rochefoucauld's very image of poisons and remedies, from *Maxime* 82.

[2] Which amplifies La Rochefoucauld's 'Nous aurions souvent honte de nos plus belles actions si le monde voyait les motifs qui les produisent' (409).

[3] Cf. the passage beginning 'Jener ist hohl und will voll werden' quoted p. 77 above.

life, and the intimate relation of good and evil is clear in such phrases as these:

Alles Gute ist die Verwandlung eines Bösen: jeder Gott hat einen Teufel zum Vater (*Nachlass* XIV, 24).

There is exactly La Rochefoucauld's love of equating opposites in such epigrams as:

Grausamkeit ist ein versetzte und geistiger gewordene Sinnlichkeit (XIV, 54).

Das kleine Leiden verkleinert und das grosse vergrössert uns. Der Wille zum grossen Leiden sollte also eine Forderung der Selbstsucht sein (XIV, 42).

This last aphorism echoes two of La Rochefoucauld's:

L'absence diminue les médiocres passions et augmente les grandes, comme le vent éteint les bougies et allume le feu (276).

Il n'appartient qu'aux grands hommes d'avoir de grands défauts (190).

We have noticed that Nietzsche considers La Rochefoucauld an adult thinker where the ancients were mere children. He brackets him with Balthasar Gracian as being contrary to the whole taste of the Greeks. He formulates his objection to La Rochefoucauld in these terms:

La Rochefoucauld blieb auf halbem Wege stehen: er leugnete die 'guten' Eigenschaften des Menschen — er hätte auch die 'bösen' leugnen sollen.

Immer noch fehlt der umgekehrte La Rochefoucauld: der, welcher zeigt, wie die Eitelkeit und Selbstsucht der Guten gewisse Eigenschaften des Menschen verrufen und endlich böse und schädlich — *gemacht* hat (*Nachlass* XIV, 30).

We have seen the beginning of this criticism before. It is indeed true that Nietzsche's examination of the roots of moral judgments is taking a historical turn which is outside the province of the Frenchman. His whole discussion of the *origins* of moral values is a working-out of pointers from La Rochefoucauld's appreciation of modern man, but in directions which the latter did not follow. But again it is not fair to La Rochefoucauld to say that he denied the good qualities and should have also denied the bad, for La Rochefoucauld too is concerned primarily to show that the real springs of action are 'beyond good and evil', and though he does not investigate historical origins, as Nietzsche is beginning to do, he is convinced that good and bad are only names applied to a reality so complex as finally to defy analysis. He is never concerned to apply those names, but only to show the discrepancies between our rationalizations of human motive and the reality. In the books following *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche follows the direction he is here foreshadowing, and in this the seventeenth-

century moralists, headed by La Rochefoucauld, are more and more reinforced by those of the eighteenth century, and particularly Helvétius.

7

In this central work of Nietzsche's, then, where he leaves the plane of argument and presents his struggles and his solutions in the guise of a symbolic story, we find that the ideas and attitudes he has formed under the impact of his French reading are no less prominent than before. As before, his chief guides are Rousseau, Montaigne, Pascal, and La Rochefoucauld, the four Frenchmen who undoubtedly influenced him most throughout his life. In the books following this one, he is concerned to explain and justify the attitude here taken up. The time of his evolution is over—he makes no more startling developments. From now on we may say broadly that he fills in details and applies the new-found sureness to a series of pressing problems. There are, of course, certain qualifications to make to this statement. The worship of Dionysos, which appears towards the end of his life, presents a radical change of emphasis, though no more, from the attitude of *Zarathustra*; and the elaboration of the conception of decadence, and the realization that it underlies all 'ascending' life, is only complete in later books. But these are not major changes, comparable to the successive transformations we have witnessed hitherto. We shall see that with Nietzsche's application of his new principles in later books goes an enormous increase in his French reading during these last years, and that he was largely successful in turning it to account in forming his own answers to the questions which occupied him.

Chapter 8

MORALITY AND SOCIETY

I

In 1885 Nietzsche determined to produce a major work which would both silence his critics and develop the vision of *Zarathustra* into a coherent and logically-argued system, and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* is the first result of this desire to clarify what was before so mysteriously expressed. He was occupied with this book all through 1885 and it was not finished until the spring of 1886. Before it was published Nietzsche had visited his old friend Rohde at Leipzig and had been shocked to find him so much aged, so completely out of sympathy with himself.[1] When the new book appeared, only Burckhardt showed any sympathy with it. Nietzsche, at the moment when he had at last succeeded in giving expression to his great revelation and was settled in a straight course to his goal, was forced to recognize that his solitude was complete. No answering voice comforted him.

Jenseits is an amplification of some of the ideas of *Zarathustra*. The will to power is from the start posited as the essence of life (sect. 13; XV, 20). Psychology is the way to the fundamental problems (sect. 23; XV, 34), and Nietzsche carries out an investigation of the prejudices which have through the ages prevented men from thinking clearly about them. The movements of thought, he says, are never what they seem. All that is profound loves a mask (sect. 40; XV, 55). In the centre of his treatment of religion he places this significant passage:

> Wer, gleich mir, mit irgend einer rätselhaften Begierde sich lange darum bemüht hat, den Pessimismus in die Tiefe zu denken und aus der halb christlichen, halb deutschen Enge und Einfalt zu erlösen, mit der er sich in diesem Jahrhundert zuletzt dargestellt hat, nämlich in Gestalt der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie; wer wirklich einmal mit einem asiatischen und überasiatischen Auge in die Weltverneinendste aller möglichen Denkweisen hinein und hinunter geblickt hat — jenseits von Gut und Böse, und nicht mehr, wie Buddha und Schopenhauer, im Bann und Wahne der Moral — der hat vielleicht ebendamit, ohne dass er eigentlich wollte, sich die Augen für das umgekehrte Ideal aufgemacht: für das Ideal des übermüthigsten, lebendigsten und weltbejahendsten Menschen, der sich nicht nur mit

[1] The definite break with him soon followed. Rohde brought it to a head by daring to criticize Taine, for whom Nietzsche felt immense admiration.

dem, was war und ist, abgefunden und vertragen gelernt hat, sondern es *so wie es war und ist* wieder haben will, in alle Ewigkeit hinaus, unersättlich da capo rufend, nicht nur zu sich, sondern zum ganzen Stücke und Schauspiele, und nicht nur zu einem Schauspiele, sondern im Grunde zu dem, der gerade dies Schauspiel nöthig hat — und nöthig macht . . . (sect. 56; XV, 75).

And throughout all this book runs the idea of the human task of culture; the ideal of 'Vornehmheit', to which all our effort must be directed, is taking shape. Nietzsche goes on to consider the roots of morality, finding them in *fear* of one sort or another, and propounding the theory of the double morality of 'lords' and 'slaves'. In the final part of the work he elaborates the ideal of 'Vornehmheit', compounded of 'immoralism', of honesty and self-reliance and a mind unfettered by prejudice (sect. 272; XV, 244).

During this year (1886) Nietzsche continued work on his magnum opus, the *Wille zur Macht*, but laid it aside in the summer to write a series of prefaces for all his works, which were to be re-issued in a collected edition. At this time too a fifth book was added to the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. All these were finished in January 1887, and by July Nietzsche had also produced what he called in a letter a 'little pamphlet', the *Genealogie der Moral*, which appeared in November. It is characterized on the title-page as an addendum to *Jenseits*, and its three parts treat of the double morality (gut / böse, gut / schlecht), of the religious conceptions of guilt and conscience, and finally of ascetic ideals. It is, perhaps, the work in which Nietzsche shows us least of himself and most of his system. It is the clearest of the productions of this last period and his most sustained piece of connected, closely-reasoned argument. The ideas expressed are already familiar, but they gain in persuasiveness by the extremely effective presentation. This is especially true of the analysis of asceticism in the last essay, one of Nietzsche's greatest pieces of psychological penetration, which comes to the conclusion that the value of asceticism lies in the fact that it offers an explanation, not a remedy, for man's suffering, and gives sense to it (III, sect. 28; XV, 449).[1]

2

An interesting account of Nietzsche at this time is given by Meta von Salis-Marschlins, to whom he spoke in September 1886 of his work, warning her of the *hardness* of his thought. In a letter to her

[1] He says the same of Christianity earlier (II, sect. 7; XV, 332).

he quotes a line from Bourget's essay on Baudelaire in *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*. The next year (1887) he was with her again, and discussed various German writers with her. But, she goes on:

> . . . in erster Linie standen für ihn die Franzosen, sowohl der klassischen Periode als des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts, voran die Moralisten, Psychologen und Novellenschreiber. Auf seine Anregung las ich Fromentin, Doudan, die Goncourtschen Cultur- und Sittenschilderungen, und beschäftigte mich noch mehr mit Stendhal, Mérimée, Taine und Bourget. Von den modernen Dichtern interessierten ihn Vigny, de Lisle, und Sully Prudhomme, Stendhal imponierte Nietzsche gewiss hauptsächlich, weil er ein starker Emotionen fähiges Naturell, eine überaus sensible Anlage mit eiserner Gewalt beherrschte. . . . Als Gegner und Verächter der französischen Revolution . . . hat Nietzsche das grosse Werk Taines über das Ereignis erleichterten und freudigen Herzens begrüsst. Am gewaltigsten wirkte der Band über Napoleon. . . .

She mentions also that 'Renan war Nietzsche antipathisch', and that he had no fondness for English or American literature.[1]

It is apparent from this, and the conclusion is amply borne out by the evidence of works and letters, that Nietzsche is still cultivating the French with great intensity, and is now turning his attention particularly to modern French literature, and especially to the psychological writing of the nineteenth century. In the elaboration of the moral bases of his final *Weltanschauung* this will leave its traces.

3

But with this increased attention to modern French literature, there is no diminution of his reading of Montaigne. He still, of course, shares the latter's view of the relativity of morality—he calls him the typical sceptic, like Socrates (*Jenseits*, sect. 208; XV, 146)—but he is attempting to go beyond him. Montaigne was content to describe the relative nature of all moral ideas and to draw the conclusion only that each man must work out his own moral salvation. Nietzsche is concerned now to find out what has made the moral systems what they are, and in this he is striking out into country untouched by Montaigne. It is La Rochefoucauld and Pascal and Stendhal who are here of value to him, and the researches of contemporary psychologists provide him with the facts on which he builds. But he still maintains that the personality is an entity which cannot be known by intellectual means, and the pride of the personality involves the recognition of its uniqueness. Moral qualities, he sees, are rarely in

[1] Meta von Salis-Marschlins: *Philosoph und Edelmensch*, 1897, pp. 51 ff.

humanity in their pure state, but are often mixed with others, perhaps their opposites:

Unsre Redlichkeit, wir freien Geister — sorgen wir dafür, dass sie nicht unsre Eitelkeit, unser Putz und Prunk, unsre Grenze, unsre Dummheit werde! (*Jenseits*, sect. 227; XV, 174).

All this is present in Montaigne.[1] In a sketch from this time (1886–7) Nietzsche says:

Man muss die vorhandenen Religionen vernichten, nur um diese absurden Schätzungen zu beseitigen, als ob ein Jesus Christus überhaupt neben einem Plato in Betracht käme, oder ein Luther neben einem Montaigne (*Nachlass* XVI, 33).

He copies out a passage from the Frenchman:

'Die Gesetze des Gewissens, welche unserem Vorgeben nach aus der Natur entspringen, entspringen vielmehr aus der Gewohnheit. Jeder verehrt in seinem Herzen die in seinem Lande gebilligten und eingeführten Meinungen und Sitten, sodass er sich denselben nicht ohne Gewissensbisse entziehen kann und denselben niemals ohne einiges Vergnügen gemäss handelt' (*Nachlass* XVI, 344, quoted from Montaigne I, 23, p. 214 f.).

The highest peaks of honesty on moral questions have been reached by Machiavelli, the Jesuits, Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld (*Nachlass* XVI, 383). Nietzsche sums up:

Der Werth einer Handlung hängt davon ab, *wer* sie thut und ob sie aus seinem Grunde oder seiner Oberfläche stammt, d.h. wie tief sie individuell ist (*Nachlass* XVI, 245),

which is exactly Montaigne's criterion.

From *Zaratlustra* onwards Nietzsche has developed the doctrine he found in Montaigne in a more restricted sense than his master. What was an ideal of conduct for all men has become in Nietzsche the mark of that section of humanity which has the power and self-consciousness of the 'lord'. The generality of men are mere sheep, who have no personal freedom or validity. But there is a hint of Nietzsche's genealogy of morals in a passage in Montaigne:

Il est vraysemblable que la première vertu qui se soit fait paraistre chez les hommes et qui a donné advantage aux uns sur les autres, c'a été cette cy (he is speaking of *force*), par laquelle les plus forts et courageux se sont rendus maistres des plus foibles et ont acquis reng et réputation particulières, d'où luy est demeuré cet honneur et dignité de langage; ou bien que ces nations, estant tres-belliqueux, ont donné le prix à celle des vertus qui leur estoit plus familière et le plus digne titre (II, 7, p. 105).

But Montaigne does not develop this point, and his final conclusion is that the good life is an ideal for all men and one which can be

[1] Nietzsche was evidently studying Montaigne during the writing of *Jenseits*. In September 1884 he wrote to his mother asking her to send the German translation (*Ges. Br.* V, 565).

realized in varying degrees by all. Nietzsche repudiates the 'delusion' that the majority of men are capable of the life of the spirit. His view is that the justification of the body of mankind is simply that it enables the higher man, who may develop into the Superman, to exist (*Götzendämmerung, Streifzüge*, sect. 44; XVII, 144). Power must express itself, and the feeling of power which is the mark of the 'vornehm' man seeks always to be translated into action:

> Der Werth einer Sache liegt mitunter nicht in Dem, was man mit ihr erreicht, sondern in Dem, was man für sie bezahlt — was sie uns *kostet* (ibid., sect. 38; XVII, 136).

In the *Wille zur Macht* the same conception is apparent. The milieu-theory cannot account for the appearance of genius (sect. 70; XVIII, 59). And again:

> Egoismus! aber noch Niemand hat gefragt: *was* für ein *ego*? Sondern Jeder setzt unwillkürlich das *ego* jedem *ego* gleich. Das sind die Consequenzen der Sklaven-Theorie vom *suffrage universel* und der 'Gleichheit' (sect. 364; XVIII, 255).

Once again we can see that the subjective conception of personality is in no way a justification for the licence of simple egoism or hedonism, and the 'Herrenmoral' is a more exacting and only for that reason more rewarding way of life than the 'Sklavenmoral'. That good and bad are relative terms, that what is good now may tomorrow be bad, that the two are inextricably tied up and mingled together—this runs through all Nietzsche's work and is repeatedly expressed here (e.g. sect. 265; XVIII, 194). The idea of 'atavism of morals' represents an advance on Montaigne by Nietzsche, but the former had well described the essential mingling of good and bad which is the basis and fundament of life and which makes any attempt to unravel the threads of human motive foredoomed to failure:

> Nostre estre est cimenté de qualitez maladives . . . car, au milieu de la compassion, nous sentons au dedans je ne scay quelle aigre-douce poincte de volupté malique à voir souffrir autrui. . . . Des quelles qualitez qui osteroit les semonces en l'homme destruiroit les fondamentalles conditions de nostre vie . . . les vices y trouvent leur reng et s'employent à la cousture de nostre liaison, comme les vénins à la conservation de nostre santé (III, 1, p. 10 f.).

The whole passage is a good example of what Nietzsche calls Montaigne's 'brave and cheerful scepticism' (sect. 367; XVIII, 256). It is plain that through all this investigation of the genealogy and functions of morality he has Montaigne in mind. Finally he sums up his point of view in these words:

> Dass der *Werth der Welt* in unserer Interpretation liegt (dass vielleicht irgendwo noch andre Interpretationen möglich sind, als bloss menschliche), dass die bisherigen

Interpretationen perspektivische Schätzungen sind, vermöge deren wir uns im Leben, d.h. im Willen zur Macht, zum Wachsthum der Macht, erhalten, dass jede *Erhöhung des Menschen* die Ueberwindung engerer Interpretationen mit sich bringt, dass jede erreichte Verstärkung und Machterweiterung neue Perspektive auftut, und an neue Horizonte glauben heisst — das geht durch meine Schriften. Die Welt, die *uns etwas angeht*, ist falsch, d.h. ist kein Thatbestand, sondern eine Ausdichtung und Rundung über einer mageren Summe von Beobachtungen; sie ist 'im Flusse' als etwas Werdendes, als eine sich immer neu verschiebende Falschheit, die sich niemals der Wahrheit nähert: denn — es giebt keine 'Wahrheit' (sect. 616; XIX, 93).

This paragraph might well stand as Nietzsche's testament. It is clear that he has reached a conclusion substantially the same as Montaigne's.

4

It has been argued that Nietzsche's ideal of enlightened selfishness owes more to Helvétius than to any other thinker.[1] It is true that Nietzsche has known and delighted in the latter for many years. He first mentions him in the *Nachlass* from 1879, saying that the whole movement of German moral philosophy from Kant onwards is an attack on him and a refusal to accept his advance (IX, 300). From this time onwards Nietzsche appears to be reading him with a measure of agreement. In the *Nachlass* from 1884–7 he commends his bravery in setting up self-interest as the dominant human motive (XVI, 148). Nietzsche admires above all his honesty and his uncompromising logic. He must have been impressed by such words as these, from the preface to *De l'Esprit*:

J'ai cru qu'on devait traiter la Morale comme toutes les autres Sciences, et faire une Morale comme une Physique expérimentale (*Œuvres complètes*, 1793–7, 10 vols.; I, 218).

Nietzsche himself is now attempting no less. And in much of his thinking on morality he follows directly in the other's footsteps. Helvétius' reduction of all human faculties to sensation,[2] his investigation of the basis of 'amour-propre',[3] his exaltation of the pleasure-principle as the only final basis of our effort,[4] his conviction that all

[1] Cf. Seillière, p. 121: 'Mais le père légitime de la Volonté de Puissance, c'est à notre avis, Helvétius . . . l'étude posthume sur "l'Homme" (Londres, 1772) est plus explicite à cet égard. L'auteur s'efforce constamment à démontrer que toutes les passions ne sont en nous que *l'amour du pouvoir* ou *l'amour de la puissance*, ou *l'amour de la force*, déguisé sous ses noms différents'. Seillière's view of Nietzsche's indebtedness cannot be accepted for the reasons given below.

[2] '. . . tout se réduit donc à sentir' (*De l'Esprit*. I, 241). The same view in *De l'Homme*: 'Dans l'homme, tout est sensation physique' (V, 171 f.; cf. V, 210 f.).

[3] Cf. his exposition of La Rochefoucauld (*De l'Esprit* I, 293, and *De l'Homme* VI, 159 f.).

[4] 'En effet, si le désir de plaisir est le principe de toutes nos actions, si tous les hommes tendent continuellement vers leur bonheur réel ou apparent, toutes nos volontés ne sont donc que l'effet de cette tendance' (*De l'Esprit* I, 299; cf. ibid. II, 180; III, 226; *De l'Homme* VI, 220, etc., etc.).

intellectual judgments are coloured by self-interest,[1] his clear-sighted recognition of our self-deception,[2] of the error caused by our innate vanity,[3] his shattering summing-up:

L'homme (et l'expérience le prouve) est de sa nature imitation et singe (*De l'Homme* X, 43),

—all these qualities in Helvétius' cynical psychology, and above all the sensationalism combined with the attention paid to the pleasure-principle, are so much ammunition for Nietzsche's onslaught on traditional morality. But he is familiar with this line of thought already, he does not need Helvétius to introduce it to him. It is in another, though related, direction that the Frenchman particularly makes his mark on him. Helvétius' contention that the passions exercise their function in overcoming the natural inertia of the personality, which he expresses in these words:

On voit donc que ce sont les passions et la haine de l'ennui qui communiquent à l'âme son mouvement, qui l'arrachent à la tendance qu'elle a naturellement vers le repos, et lui font surmonter cette force d'inertie à laquelle elle est toujours prête à céder (*De l'Esprit* III, 88).

—this reinforces Nietzsche's conviction and is fruitful in his thinking. And above all, Helvétius' insistence that the natural urge of the personality is to dominate is plainly in line with Nietzsche's theory of the will to power:

Chacun veut être le plus heureux qu'il est possible; chacun veut être revêtu d'une puissance qui force les hommes à contribuer de tout leur pouvoir à son bonheur, c'est pour cet effet qu'on veut leur commander (*De l'Esprit* III, 252 f.; cf. *De l'Homme* VI, 161, 234).

This in turn is built upon the view that life is essentially a struggle for self-preservation, that the overcoming of obstacles is essential to well-being. These are directions of thought which Nietzsche makes his own, and which lie at the root of his psychology and of the theory of the 'Wille zur Macht'. And we may be sure that Helvétius' outspoken attack on Christianity and the church found a ready acceptance by Nietzsche. Indeed, Helvétius' view of the psychology of the priest provides Nietzsche's own starting-point:

Le fanatique est un instrument de vengeance que le moine fabrique et emploie lorsque son intérêt le lui ordonne (*De l'Homme* VIII, 59).

But it is a mistake to say that Helvétius has exercised a determinative influence on his reader. The Frenchman's psychology is

[1] Cf. *De l'Esprit* II, 6.
[2] *De l'Esprit* II, 31; similarly II, 55; III, 189; IV, 206.
[3] *De l'Esprit* II, 115.

altogether too *simpliste* for that—he gives a very much too restricted view of human nature, which Nietzsche is in any case already well acquainted with, to be more than a useful ally in the campaign against the disguises and dishonesties of traditional morality. And furthermore, his teaching is fundamentally worlds away from Nietzsche's. His theory of the search for power, for instance, is derived from the pleasure-principle, whereas Nietzsche reverses this order. Where Helvétius says that men want power *in order to* enjoy the gratification of their passions, for Nietzsche the will to power is primary and is not based on any such hedonistic view. This radical difference between them enables Nietzsche to accept and use many of the ideas of Helvétius, while elaborating a psychology of morals which is much more profound than the other's. Nietzsche is plainly aware of this limitation of the Frenchman, when he writes in the *Wille zur Macht* with complete scorn and rejection:

Und Helvétius entwickelt uns, dass man nach Macht strebt, um die Genüsse zu haben, welche dem Mächtigen zu Gebote stehen — er versteht dieses Streben nach Macht als Willen zum Genuss! als Hedonismus! (sect. 751; XIX, 179).

5

In *Jenseits* (1886) we are again faced with that problem of the interconnectedness and common origin of vice and virtue which so preoccupied La Rochefoucauld:

Bei allem Werte, der dem Wahren, dem Wahrhaftigen, dem Selbstlosen zukommen mag: es wäre möglich, dass dem Scheine, dem Willen zur Täuschung, dem Eigennutz und der Begierde ein für alles Leben höherer und grundsätzlicherer Wert zugeschrieben werden müsste. Es wäre sogar noch möglich, dass *was* den Wert jener guten und verehrten Dinge ausmacht, gerade darin bestünde, mit jenen schlimmen, scheinbar entgegengesetzten Dingen auf verfängliche Weise verwandt, verknüpft, verhäkelt, vielleicht gar wesensgleich zu sein (sect. 2; XV, 9).

And Nietzsche carries out an exhaustive analysis of the 'Wille zur Wahrheit' which is closely parallel to La Rochefoucauld's analysis of virtue. His conclusion is in La Rochefoucauld's vein:

Ich glaube demgemäss nicht, dass ein 'Trieb zur Erkenntnis' der Vater der Philosophie ist, sondern dass sich ein anderer Trieb, hier wie sonst, der Erkenntnis (und der Verkenntnis) nur wie eines Werkzeugs bedient hat. Wer aber die Grundtriebe des Menschen darauf hin ansieht, wie weit sie gerade hier als *inspirierende* Genien (oder Dämonen oder Kobolde) ihr Spiel getrieben haben mögen, wird finden, dass sie alle schon einmal Philosophie getrieben haben — und dass jeder einzelne von ihnen gerade *sich* gar zu gerne als letzten Zweck des Daseins und als berechtigten Herrn aller übrigen Triebe darstellen möchte. Denn jeder Trieb ist herrschsüchtig; und als *solcher* versucht er zu philosophieren (sect. 6; XV, 12 f.).

He places a cardinal emphasis, following La Rochefoucauld, and Helvétius, on the rôle of the physiological factors:

Auch hinter aller Logik und ihrer anscheinenden Selbstherrlichkeit der Bewegung stehen Wert-Schätzungen, deutlicher gesprochen, physiologische Forderungen zur Erhaltung einer bestimmten Art von Leben (sect. 3; XV, 9).

But here already the phrase about 'a certain kind of life' shows how Nietzsche is extending the ideas of the Frenchman and relating his insight into morality and psychology to the task of training and breeding the human race, of which we shall see more later.

As one would expect, *Jenseits* is full of psychological aperçus entirely in La Rochefoucauld's vein:

Wer sich selbst verachtet, achtet sich doch immer noch dabei als Verächter (sect. 78; XV, 91).

Der Wille, einen Affekt zu überwinden, ist zuletzt doch nur der Wille eines anderen oder mehrerer anderen Affekte (sect. 117; XV, 96).[1]

Aber wer wirklich Opfer gebracht hat, weiss, dass er etwas dafür wollte und bekam — vielleicht etwas von sich für etwas von sich — dass er hier hingab um dort mehr zu haben, vielleicht um überhaupt mehr zu sein oder sich doch als 'mehr' zu fühlen (sect. 220; XV, 165).

This last aphorism combines many of La Rochefoucauld's deepest convictions—the 'moral action' as a result of a conflict of egoistic impulses, the rôle of our 'amour-propre', the self-deception inevitable in moral judgments, the idea of a will to power which lies behind La Rochefoucauld's attitude and which Nietzsche develops.

And Nietzsche reaches a final shattering summing-up which is so dear to him that he uses it twice:

Wie? Ein grosser Mann? Ich sehe nur den Schauspieler seines eignen Ideals (sect. 97; XV, 94).[2]

His extension of La Rochefoucauld is seen in this:

Was eine Zeit als böse empfindet, ist gewöhnlich ein unzeitgemässer Nachschlag dessen, was ehemals als gut empfunden wurde — der Atavismus eines älteren Ideals (sect. 149; XV, 101).

Here a second divergence between Nietzsche and his master is clearly apparent. He extends La Rochefoucauld in two directions—towards the idea of 'Züchtung' on the one hand, and here towards the historical explanation of moral ideas. This is his attempt to solve the mystery which La Rochefoucauld had revealed, to explain the complexity of moral problems, the fact that good and evil are so

[1] Cf. La Rochefoucauld's similar formulations in *Maxime* 10 and elsewhere.
[2] The same in different words in *Der Fall Wagner* (XVII, 60).

bound up together, by reference to the historical conditions of the development of morality.

In the *Genealogie* (1887) this question of the historical development of morals is followed up and the theory already sketched is filled out and completed. But there is always the final mystery, the baffling complexity which forbids judgment; it is this complexity which emerges most strongly in the book, and here again Nietzsche is only echoing La Rochefoucauld:

(Moral als Folge, als Symptom, als Maske, als Tartüfferie, als Krankheit, als Missverständnis, aber auch Moral als Ursache, als Heilmittel, als Stimulans, als Hemmung, als Gift) (*Vorrede*, sect. 6; XV, 275).

The long analysis of the ascetic ideal in the last part of the book includes such passages as this:

Das asketische Ideal hat ein *Ziel* — dasselbe ist allgemein genug, dass alle Interessen des menschlichen Daseins sonst, an ihm gemessen, klein und eng erscheinen, es legt sich Zeiten, Völker, Menschen unerbittlich auf dieses Eine Ziel hin aus, es lässt keine andere Auslegung, kein anderes Ziel gelten, es verruft, verneint, bejaht, bestätigt allein im Sinne *seiner* Interpretation (— und gab es je ein zu Ende gedachteres System von Interpretationen?); es unterwirft sich keiner Macht, es glaubt vielmehr an sein Vorrecht vor jeder Macht, an seine unbedingte *Rang-Distanz* in Hinsicht auf jede Macht — es glaubt daran, dass nichts auf Erden von Macht da ist, das nicht von ihm aus erst einen Sinn, ein Daseins-Recht, einen Wert zu empfangen habe, als Werkzeug zu *seinem* Werke, als Weg und Mittel zu *seinem* Ziele . . . (III, sect. 23; XV, 446).

This shows the same treatment, the same description of a quality in personal terms, as though it were a live organism, and even some similarity of phrasing, to La Rochefoucauld's famous description of 'amour-propre' (S, 1).

In the *Wille zur Macht* Nietzsche is concerned to separate his teaching from that of La Rochefoucauld:

Egoismus und sein Problem: die christliche Verdüsterung in La Rochefoucauld, welcher ihn überall herauszog und damit den Wert der Dinge und Tugenden *vermindert* glaubte! Dem entgegen suchte ich zunächst zu beweisen, dass es gar nichts Anderes geben könne als Egoismus — dass den Menschen, bei denen das Ego schwach und dünn wird, auch die Kraft der grossen Liebe schwach wird — dass die Liebenden vor Allem es aus Stärke ihres Egos sind — dass Liebe ein Ausdruck von Egoismus ist usw . . . (sect. 362; XVIII, 255).

In two places he classes La Rochefoucauld with Pascal (sects. 289, 786; XVIII, 271; XIX, 202). And he criticizes him in these terms:

Die unfreiwillige Naivetät des La Rochefoucauld, welcher glaubt, etwas Kühnes, Freies und Paradoxes zu sagen — damals war die 'Wahrheit' in psychologischen

Dingen etwas, das erstaunen machte — Beispiel: 'les grandes âmes ne sont pas celles qui ont moins de passions et plus de vertus que les âmes communes, mais seulement celles qui ont de plus grands desseins'[1] — (sect. 772; XIX, 189; cf. also sect. 870; XIX, 268 f.),

and he goes on to quote J. S. Mill's opinion that he is merely a cynic. In all this one may detect a note of exasperation on Nietzsche's part that La Rochefoucauld should have said so well so much of what he himself is saying. He has indeed taken a different direction from his master, but almost every aspect of his thought bears the traces of the very powerful influence of La Rochefoucauld, and his strictures now are perhaps partly the result of his consciousness of this and his unwillingness to admit the degree of his dependence.

6

With La Rochefoucauld goes Pascal. In *Jenseits* (1886) Nietzsche considers him mainly as an anti-rationalist, seeing in him the most profound critic of the human reason, and one who reduces it on its own terms to a position of conditional efficacy only. Pascal again and again makes his position clear.[2] His contention is that if the human reason alone sets out to find the truth it can come only to the conclusion that 'le pyronnisme est le vrai'. Further, that reality is manifest on differing planes ('ordres') of existence, and that ideas incomprehensible or logically contradictory on one plane may be perceived by faith to be true on another. There is thus a continual 'renversement du pour au contre', in which the reason is only one of the means by which we attain to knowledge:

La foi dit bien ce que les sens ne disent pas, mais non pas le contraire de ce qu'ils disent. Elle est au-dessus et non pas contre (265).

Nietzsche sometimes regards this quality in Pascal as a 'sacrifizio dell'intelletto' (*Jenseits*, sect. 229; XV, 177), and sometimes sees Pascal as himself an example of European decadence (sect. 62; XV, 84). But he is not blind to the extreme integrity and strength of the Frenchman:

Um zum Beispiel zu errathen und festzustellen, was für eine Geschichte bisher das Problem von *Wissen und Gewissen* in der Seele der homines religiosi gehabt hat, dazu müsste Einer vielleicht selbst so tief, so verwundet, so ungeheuer sein, wie es das intellektuelle Gewissen Pascal's war (sect. 45; XV, 65).[3]

[1] A suppressed *maxime* (S, 31).
[2] Cf. fragments 416, 395, 272, 267, 277, etc., etc.
[3] Cf. also sect. 46 (XV, 66) on Pascal's 'Selbstmord der Vernunft'.

And yet in the main Nietzsche accepts Pascal's analysis of man, which is so radical:

> Car enfin qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature? Un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout. . . . Connaissons donc notre portée; nous sommes quelque chose, et ne sommes pas tout; ce que nous avons d'être nous dérobe la connaissance des premiers principes qui naissent du néant; et le peu que nous avons d'être nous cache la vue de l'infini. . . . Nous voguons sur un milieu vaste, toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre . . . nous brûlons du désir de trouver une assiette ferme, et une dernière base constante, pour y édifier une tour qui s'élève à l'infini; mais tout notre fondement craque, et la terre s'ouvre jusqu'aux abîmes (72).[1]

This view in Pascal is coupled with the conviction of the 'marques de la grandeur de l'homme', which lie in the power of thought and the recognition of our misery. The universe may kill a man, but the man is greater than the universe, because he knows he is being killed and the universe does not. Something of Pascal's description of the human situation can be seen in Nietzsche, in such lines as these:

> Im Menschen ist *Geschöpf* und *Schöpfer* vereint: Im Menschen ist Stoff, Bruchstück, Ueberfluss, Lehm, Koth, Unsinn, Chaos; aber im Menschen ist auch Schöpfer, Bildner, Hammer-Härte, Zuschauer-Göttlichkeit und siebenter Tag: — versteht ihr diesen Gegensatz? (sect. 225; XV, 172).

And Nietzsche is meditating at this time Pascal's doctrine of truth and of the 'hidden God'. In the preface to the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (written in 1886) he says:

> Wir glauben nicht mehr daran, dass Wahrheit noch Wahrheit bleibt, wenn man ihr die Schleier abzieht. . . . Heute gilt es uns als eine Sache der Schicklichkeit, dass man nicht Alles nackt sehen, nicht bei Allem dabei sein, nicht Alles verstehen und 'wissen' wolle. . . . Man sollte die *Scham* besser in Ehren halten, mit der sich die Natur hinter Räthsel und bunte Ungewissheiten versteckt hat. Vielleicht ist die Wahrheit ein Weib, das Gründe hat, ihre Gründe nicht sehen zu lassen (*Vorrede*, sect. 4; XII, 8).

For Nietzsche there is no absolute truth that we can attain, and all our truths are 'perspektivische Schätzungen'. And in this he is following Pascal's analysis of 'human' knowledge.[2]

In the *Genealogie* he expresses a certain admiration for Pascal's argument for an ascetic life, or rather for the submission of the body

[1] Cf. also fragments 358, 389.

[2] Cf. Pascal's formulations in *Pensées* 9, 394, etc. 'Chaque chose est ici vraie en partie, fausse en partie. La vérité essentielle n'est pas ainsi: elle est toute pure et toute vraie. Ce mélange la déshonore et l'anéantit. Rien n'est purement vrai . . . et aussi rien n'est vrai, en l'entendant du pur vrai. . . . Nous n'avons ni vrai ni bien qu'en partie, et mêlé de mal et de faux' (385). Nietzsche accepts all this, but, of course, denies the existence of the 'vérité essentielle' mentioned by Pascal. Cf. also fragments 304, 327, 328, 337, etc.

to a discipline (the 'machine') of ceremonies in order that the heart may be inclined to believe, 'in geistiger Hinsicht das Prinzip Pascals "il faut s'abêtir" ' (III, sects. 17 f; XV, 413 ff.).

In the first part of the *Wille zur Macht* (sects. 23 ff.; XVIII, 22 ff.) he analyses the position of modern man in terms very reminiscent of Pascal's description of 'man without God' in the fragment on the two infinities. Yet he regards Pascal still as typical of 'christliche Corruption' (sect. 51; XVIII, 41) and analyses his effect at great length:

'*Ohne den christlichen Glauben*, meinte Pascal, werdet ihr euch selbst, ebenso wie die Natur und die Geschichte, un monstre et un chaos'. Diese Prophezeiung haben wir *erfüllt*: nachdem das schwachlich-optimistische achtzehnte Jahrhundert den Menschen *verhübscht* und *verrationalisiert* hatte. *Schopenhauer und Pascal.* — In einem wesentlichen Sinne ist Schopenhauer der erste, der die Bewegung Pascal's wieder *aufnimmt*: un monstre et un chaos, folglich Etwas, das zu *verneinen* ist — Geschichte, Natur, der Mensch selbst!

'*Unsere Unfähigkeit, die Wahrheit zu erkennen*, ist die Folge unsrer *Verderbnis*, unsres moralischen *Verfalls*': so Pascal. Und so im Grunde Schopenhauer. 'Umso tiefer die Verderbnis der Vernunft, umso nothwendiger die Heilslehre' — oder, Schopenhauerisch gesprochen, die Verneinung (sect. 83; XVIII, 65; cf. also sect. 101; XVIII, 79).

Using Pascal's statement that a 'common error' is better for the generality of men than the uncertainty to which they fall victim if left to themselves,[1] Nietzsche derives the *conscience* as an effective stimulant to morality from the 'holy lie' popularized by priests to maintain their own power and to imprint their morality upon their flock. The effect is that life has no more problems (sect. 141; XVIII, 109), but also the richness and adventure of living are destroyed.

Pascal is contrasted to Rousseau, the latter explaining the contradiction in man by reference to the political distortion of nature, while Pascal draws the conclusion of Original Sin, that man is a 'roi dépossédé' (sect. 347; XVIII, 244 f.). Nietzsche rejects both alternatives, but there is genuine admiration for Pascal in this:

Wenn der Mensch sündhaft ist, durch und durch, so darf er sich nur hassen. Im Grunde dürfte er auch seine Mitmenschen mit keiner anderen Empfindung behandeln wie sich selbst; Menschenliebe bedarf einer Rechtfertigung; sie liegt darin, dass *Gott sie befohlen hat.* — Hieraus folgt, dass alle die natürlichen Instinkte des Menschen (zur Liebe usw) ihm an sich unerlaubt scheinen und erst nach ihrer *Verleugnung*, auf Grund eines Gehorsams gegen Gott, wieder zu Recht kommen. — Pascal, der bewunderungswürdige *Logiker* des Christenthums, *gieng* so weit! man erwäge sein Verhältnis zu seiner Schwester. 'Sich nicht lieben machen' schien ihm christlich! (sect. 388; XVIII, 270).

[1] Cf. *Pensées* 18.

And the desperate nature of Pascal's thought is indicated:

Noch desperater Pascal: er begriff, dass dann auch die Erkenntnis corrupt, gefälscht sein müsse — dass *Offenbarung* noth thue, um die Welt auch nur als verneinenswerth zu begreifen (sect. 411; XVIII, 287).

But despite these objections—all concerned with Pascal's Christianity, which we shall consider later—Nietzsche accepts the fundamental Pascalian analysis of man, in some places even following the phrasing and movement of his language:

Der Mensch, eine kleine, überspannte Thierart, die — glücklicher Weise — ihre Zeit hat: das Leben auf der Erde überhaupt ein Augenblick, ein Zwischenfall, eine Ausnahme ohne Folge, Etwas, das für den Gesamt-Charakter der Erde belanglos bleibt; die Erde selbst, wie jedes Gestirn, ein Hiatus zwischen zwei Nichtsen, ein Ereignis ohne Plan, Vernunft, Wille, Selbstbewusstsein, die schlimmste Art des Nothwendigen, die *dumme* Nothwendigkeit — Gegen diese Betrachtung empört sich etwas in uns: die Schlange Eitelkeit redet uns zu 'das Alles muss falsch sein: *denn* es empört — könnte das nicht Alles nur Schein sein?' (sect. 303; XVIII, 218).[1]

7

In general it may be said that Nietzsche's moral thinking is now passing beyond the point where he and Rousseau met and joined hands. The whole conception of 'Umwertung', the morality 'beyond good and evil', is quite foreign to the latter. In *Jenseits* there is but one reference to him (sect. 245; XV, 202), and in the *Vorrede* to *Morgenröthe* (written in 1886) Nietzsche coins what is to be a favourite epithet—'Moral-Tarantel'—for him (X, 6). This charge of moral fanaticism comes a little strangely from Nietzsche, but he was still enough of a pupil of Voltaire and the seventeenth-century French writers to shrink from the 'certainty' of Rousseau, from the passion and conviction of the man who could write the last chapter of the *Contrat Social*,[2] from the fanaticism which is apparent in Rousseau's work and is soon to be unmistakable in Nietzsche's own. In the *Genealogie* (1887) he makes only a passing reference to Rousseau's political simplicity (II, sect. 17; XV, 354). And in the *Nachlass* from this period his references are entirely antipathetic:

Rousseau: in seiner Bevorzugung der Armen, der Frauen, des Volkes, als

[1] Despite the irony of Nietzsche's tone, this section is very reminiscent of the fragment on the 'deux infinis' (72). Earlier he says this: 'Die tiefsten und unerschopftesten Bücher werden wohl immer etwas von dem aphoristischen und plötzlichen Charakter von Pascal's *Pensées* haben' (sect. 424; XVIII, 297). And his own practice shows how much he has taken the lesson to heart.

[2] And cf. Rousseau's savage footnote in *Julie*: 'Si j'étais magistrat, et que la loi portât peine de mort contre les athées, je commencerais par faire brûler comme tel quiconque en viendrait dénoncer un autre (*Œuvres* IV, 413 note).

souverän, ist ganz in der *christlichen Bewegung* darin[1]: alle sklavenhaften Fehler und Tugenden sind an ihm zu studieren, auch die unglaublichste Verlogenheit (*der* will Gerechtigkeit lehren!) Sein Gegenstück Napoleon — antik, Menschen-Verächter (*Nachlass* XVI, 348).

It is the 'return to nature' which particularly attracts Nietzsche's attention during these last years. In *Götzendämmerung* (1888) Rousseau figures in the list of his *bêtes noires*, 'Meine Unmöglichen', as 'Rousseau, oder die Rückkehr zur Natur in impuris naturalibus' (*Streifzüge*, sect. 1; XVII, 107), and near the end of this essay Nietzsche defines his own position in contrast to Rousseau's:

> Auch ich rede von 'Rückkehr zur Natur', obwohl es eigentlich nicht ein Zurückgehen, sondern ein *Hinaufkommen* ist, hinauf in die hohe freie, selbst furchtbare Natur und Natürlichkeit, eine solche, die mit grossen Aufgaben spielt, spielen *darf* — Um es im Gleichnis zu sagen: Napoleon war ein Stück Rückkehr zur Natur, so wie ich sie verstehe . . . aber Rousseau — wohin wollte *der* eigentlich zurück? Rousseau, dieser erste moderne Mensch, Idealist und canaille in Einer Person, der die moralische 'Würde' nöthig hatte, um seinen eignen Aspekt auszuhalten; krank vor zügelloser Eitelkeit und zügelloser Selbstverachtung. Auch diese Missgeburt, welche sich an die Schwelle der neuen Zeit gelagert hat, wollte 'Rückkehr zur Natur' — wohin, nochmals gefragt, wollte Rousseau zurück? Ich hasse Rousseau noch *in* der Revolution; sie ist der welthistorische Ausdruck für diese Doppelheit von Idealist und canaille . . . (sect. 48; XVII, 148 f.).

He does admit here some degree of similarity between his own teaching and that of Rousseau, but is horrified at the effects he believes the latter has had. His hatred of the Revolution and all that has sprung from it, his disgust at the doctrine of equality, which has served only mediocrity and vulgarity, is all visited on Rousseau's head. In a letter to Gast he gives his exasperation with the Frenchman free rein (24 November, 1887; *Ges. Br.* IV, 340). Here he repeats the same arguments and shows the same hatred of Rousseau as the man who stands at the head of all 'modern' civilization. Here he champions Voltaire, but it remains true that Voltaire never affected him nearly as deeply as Rousseau. Whenever he thinks of the latter he is passionate, passionately scornful or resentful or antagonistic. He can hold Rousseau responsible for all that he hates and inveigh against him in the bitterest terms, but he cannot be cool about him, cannot preserve the Voltairean equilibrium and freedom of the mind. With Voltaire his mind delights and agrees—with Rousseau, deny it however much he will, his heart is engaged.

[1] In general this is perhaps just, but Rousseau had at times shared Nietzsche's tendency to associate Christianity with the slave-personality: 'Les vrais chrétiens sont faits pour être esclaves; ils le savent et ne s'en émeuvent guère: cette courte vie a trop peu de prix à leurs yeux (*Contrat Social Œuvres* III, 387).

In the *Wille zur Macht* he is concerned frequently with the historical importance of Rousseau in the development of modern man, and this will be considered later. But continually also he takes up the question of Rousseau's 'return to nature' and sets himself in opposition to it:

Gegen Rousseau: Der Mensch ist *leider* nicht mehr böse genug: die Gegner Rousseaus welche sagen 'der Mensch ist ein Raubthier' haben leider nicht Recht. Nicht die Verderbnis des Menschen, sondern seine Verzärtlichung und Vermoralisierung ist der Fluch. . . . Rousseau ist ein Symptom der Selbstverachtung und der erhitzten Eitelkeit — beides Anzeichen, dass es am dominierenden Willen fehlt . . . (he compares him with Voltaire, seeing Rousseau as essentially weak and diseased) (sects. 98–100; XVIII, 76 ff.).

Nietzsche blames Rousseau for introducing into our culture a dangerous principle of subjective illogicality which it could not bear, for cultivating 'sentiment', which, though itself healthy, led to revolution and romanticism. But his arguments against Rousseau apply largely to himself too, as he had already half admitted.[1] For his own view is just as 'irrational', his own emphasis on instinct and will and the unknowable problematic individual personality is just as marked as Rousseau's, and his own insistence on the human will is comparable to Rousseau's on 'human nature'. And he is just as far from Voltaire as Rousseau is. He pours scorn on the latter's idea of a 'return to nature',[2] he repeats the charge that Kant was corrupted by the moral fanatic Rousseau (sect. 101; XVIII, 79). He sees the present as a great advance on him:

Statt des 'Naturmenschen' Rousseaus hat das 19. Jahrhundert ein *wahreres* Bild vom 'Menschen' entdeckt — es hat dazu den Muth gehabt. Im ganzen ist damit dem christlichen Begriff 'Mensch' eine Wiederherstellung zu Theil geworden. Wozu man *nicht* den Muth gehabt hat, das ist, gerade *diesen* 'Mensch an sich' gutzuheissen und in ihm die Zukunft des Menschen garantiert zu sehen (sect. 1,017; XIX, 343).[3]

But in all this Nietzsche is over-simplifying and misinterpreting Rousseau and his 'return to nature', which is much closer to his own views than he will admit.[4]

[1] Cf. the passage in which Nietzsche differentiates his own 'return to nature' from Rousseau's, quoted, p. 128, above.

[2] Cf. in addition to the passages quoted, sects. 340, 347 (XVIII, 240, 244 f.).

[3] So Rousseau was wrong in saying that man was good and Christianity right in saying that he was evil! But Nietzsche, nevertheless, follows man as he is, 'bad', and thus takes Rousseau's view against the orthodox Christian one.

[4] The same point is put in sect. 117 (XVIII, 88). Rousseau's view that man is intrinsically 'good' and Pascal's that he is intrinsically 'bad' were both denied by Nietzsche, whose ethic is 'beyond good and evil'. But his exhortation 'Become what thou art' carries the presupposition that man is ultimately valuable in himself, which is nearer Rousseau than Pascal.

8

It is plain that despite Nietzsche's expressions of admiration for Voltaire, he is worlds away from him. The decisive step was perhaps *Zarathustra*, which opens a perspective quite foreign to Voltaire's whole conception of reality. In *Candide* the old woman says after her tale of woe:

> Cette faiblesse ridicule est peut-être un de nos penchants les plus funestes: car y a-t-il rien de plus sot que de vouloir porter continuellement un fardeau qu'on veut toujours jetter par terre? d'avoir son être en horreur, et de tenir à son être? enfin de caresser le serpent qui nous dévore, jusqu'à ce qu'il nous ait mangé le coeur? (*Œuvres* 44, 259).

But is this not exactly what Zarathustra does, and does not Nietzsche's 'Amor Fati' mean exactly this? Such a reflection brings out clearly the gulf between the two men, though it is, of course, true that Voltaire's ideas are still fruitful in his reader. The Superman is, among other things, a call to man to form himself, to integrate his life into a supreme personal style, and this is largely an extension of the qualities Nietzsche had seen and admired in Voltaire. In *Jenseits*, however, there is some scorn of him:

> Oh Voltaire! Oh Humanität! Oh Blödsinn! Mit der 'Wahrheit', mit dem *Suchen* der Wahrheit hat es etwas auf sich; und wenn der Mensch es dabei gar zu menschlich treibt — 'il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien'[1] — ich wette, er findet nichts! (sect. 35; XV, 51).

And there are other ironic references to Voltaire in the book (e.g. sect. 216; XV, 162). Nietzsche bemoans the fact that the historical sense has killed in the barbarism of to-day the old 'Vornehmheit', and he instances Saint-Évremond and Voltaire as the final examples of this spirit (sect. 224; XV, 168 f.). From now on there is no mention of the latter as a 'free spirit', but only of his cultivation of style and form. And it is this quality which dominates the carefully-elaborated description of the conflict between Voltaire and Rousseau which continually recurs in the *Wille zur Macht*.[2] Always the former is cast as the spirit of 'Vornehmheit', of pattern and style in living, while Rousseau represents the immediate surrender to crude experience, to the flux and shapelessness of life itself. Nietzsche always takes Voltaire's side, but we have seen enough to realize that it is with Rousseau and not Voltaire that he is fundamentally allied.

[1] This line is from Voltaire's *Épitre à un Homme* of 1776.
[2] Cf. especially sects. 91, 98, 99, 100, 123 (XVIII, 68, 75 ff., 92).

9

With Voltaire Nietzsche links in these last years the Abbé Galiani, whom he apparently discovered in 1885, and who arouses his admiration henceforth.[1] In *Jenseits* he says:

Es giebt sogar Fälle, wo zum Ekel sich die Bezauberung mischt: da nämlich, wo an einem solchen indiskreten Bock und Affen, durch eine Laune der Natur, das Genie gebunden ist, wie bei dem Abbé Galiani, dem tiefsten, scharfsichtigsten, und vielleicht auch schmutzigsten Menschen seines Jahrhunderts — er war viel tiefer als Voltaire und folglich auch ein gut Theil schweigsamer (sect. 26; XV, 41).

And Nietzsche quotes him repeatedly in this book (sects. 222, 228, 270, 288; XV, 167, 174, 246, 253) and in the *Nachlass* from this time (XIV, 304; XVI, 174, 321, 348, 383, 404). On the centenary of his death Nietzsche wrote a long letter to Gast about him, expressing his admiration for him and discussing the Galiani-Mme d'Épinay correspondence about Piccini's operas. He quotes at length, both in French and in translation, from Galiani's letters of 22 June and 9 November, 1771 (*Lettres* I, 409, 480), and plainly has either read them very recently or has them before him while writing. And in the long letter to Gast about Rousseau, already mentioned, he quotes Galiani's couplet 'Un monstre gai vaut mieux / Qu'un sentimental ennuyeux'.[2] In the *Wille zur Macht* he is continually occupied with him. In one place he says that the time of peace and Christianity which Galiani had prophesied for the nineteenth century is now over and war and anarchy are increasing, which pleases him.[3] In another he transcribes a passage in which Galiani considers the causes of war (sect. 133; XVIII, 99, from *Lettres* II, 554 f.), and he goes on to say that he does not share the peace-loving nature of 'my late friend Galiani'. He quotes him again without acknowledgment in another place:

Aber der Machiavellismus, pur, sans mélange, cru, vert, dans toute sa force, dans toute son âpreté, ist übermenschlich . . . (sect. 304; XVIII, 219, from *Lettres* II, 114).

And he transcribes this passage:

'Les philosophes ne sont pas faits pour s'aimer. Les aigles ne volent point en

[1] Cf. Nietzsche's letters to Malwida, 13 March, 1885 (*Ges. Br.* III, 623); to Gast, 30 March, 1885 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 214); to his family, 21 March, 1885 (*Ges. Br.* V, 603). It must have been soon after this that he acquired Galiani's *Lettres à Mme d'Épinay*, which figures in his library and from which he frequently quotes.

[2] Nietzsche refers to this couplet (from Galiani's letter to Mme d'Épinay of 7 July, 1770, *Lettres* I, 188) on other occasions too (*Wille zur Macht*, sects. 35, 91; XVIII, 29, 68), sometimes attributing it to Voltaire.

[3] Sect. 127 (XVIII, 95). The reference is to *Lettres* I, 387.

compagnie. Il faut laisser cela aux perdrix, aux étourneaux. . . . Planer au-dessus et avoir des griffes, voilà le lot des grands génies' Galiani. (sect. 989; XIX, 332).[1]

It is plain that Galiani has suddenly become one of Nietzsche's favourites. Both his wit and his utter scepticism[2] and disillusionment no doubt attracted his reader, and his insistence on exposing pomposity and pretensiousness,[3] his cynical desperation that 'the dice are loaded',[4] his conviction that we can distinguish pleasure from pain but not truth from error[5] and law and right are simply a matter of the balance of forces,[6] that both the fact of human determinism and the human conviction of freedom are necessary for the running of the Universe[7]—all these ideas found a ready echo in Nietzsche. And some of his formulations express well ideas which Nietzsche is only just beginning to entertain:

Tel est l'homme, toujours diaphane, il croit être quelquechose en soi-même, il n'est rien qu'une transparence (*Lettres* II, 64).

And this could be taken more seriously than it was meant:

Dans l'ordre essentiel et naturel de ce monde admirable, il y a des sots et des hommes d'esprit. La nature a voulu (si pourtant elle a jamais rien voulu) que chacun y jouât son rôle. Or il n'y a que deux rôles à jouir: commander ou conseiller. On ne pouvait pas laisser conseiller aux sots; ils n'avaient pas même l'esprit de déraisonner. Il a fallu donc que les sots commandassent, car s'ils ne faisaient pas cela, ils ne feraient rien du tout, et ils seraient un superflu de la nature, qui ne doit avoir rien de superflu, si ce n'est elle-même toute entière (*Lettres* I, 396).

In his letters to Mme d'Épinay, Galiani is, of course, continually ironical, indulging in gentle leg-pulling and bitter cynicism, cloaked by a delightful wit, but what impressed Nietzsche, apart from the extreme virtuosity of such writing, was no doubt the manner in

[1] The passage is from *Lettres* I, 309. Nietzsche has omitted Galiani's example of the 'eagle' philosopher—Voltaire!

[2] Of his own *Dialogues sur les blés*, in which Zanobi is himself, Galiani wrote: 'Il (the reader) s'apercevra à la deuxième ou à la troisième lecture de l'ouvrage que le chevalier Zanobi ne croit ni ne pense un mot de tout ce qu'il dit; qu'il est le plus grand sceptique et le plus grand académique du monde: qu'il ne croit rien, en rien, sur rien, de rien. . . . Au reste, le livre est bien le livre d'un philosophe, et il est seul capable de former un philosophe et un homme d'esprit: c'est-à-dire un homme qui a la clef du mystère, et qui sait que le *tout* se réduit à *zéro*' (*Lettres* I, 57 f.).

[3] This is a typical remark: 'Tout est pendule dans ce monde, les saisons, les empires, les gouvernements, les hommes, le bonheur et le malheur, la vertu, le vice; on monte, on descend, et l'on ne saurait jamais s'arrêter au milieu: si l'on y s'arrêtait, on s'y trouverait si bien que le mouvement finirait: ceci est philosophie, et du plus sublime' (*Lettres* I, 194).

[4] Si tout était régi par le hasard, il n'y aurait pas d'injustice dans le monde. Rien n'est si juste que le hasard. C'est sa nature même d'être juste. Il tombe à droite, à gauche, toujours neutre, toujours indifférent, toujours égal, toujours compensé, mais *c'est que les dès sont pipés*, et voilà le diable (*Lettres* I, 49; cf. I, 236).

[5] Cf. *Lettres* I, 258. Also *Lettres* II, 135, 282, 569, etc.

[6] Cf. *Lettres* I, 355.

[7] This is argued at length in *Lettres* I, 483 ff.

which the disillusioned Neapolitan, cursed with great physical ugliness and a failure in his public life, nevertheless contrived to distil a large measure of enjoyment from living, and, in the restricted surroundings of Naples, to impart the stamp of culture to it. The qualities of Neapolitan life in the last part of the eighteenth century, as revealed in Galiani's letters, were those of the French salons of the time, in which wit and that refined detachment from the crudities and passions of life allowed intellectual enjoyment of the highest order—and it is these qualities which impress Nietzsche so much that he imputes a greater profundity to Galiani than is in fact warranted.

10

He frequently couples Galiani with Stendhal, and during these years the latter too is a constant companion. Nietzsche and Gast had studied him from 1881 onwards. In *Jenseits* (1886) Nietzsche quotes him:

> Einen letzten Zug zum Bilde des freigeisterischen Philosophen bringt Stendhal bei, den ich um des deutschen Geschmacks willen nicht unterlassen will, zu unterstreichen — denn er geht *wider* den deutschen Geschmack. 'Pour être bon philosophe, sagt dieser letzte grosse Psycholog,[1] il faut être sec, clair, sans illusion. Un banquier qui a fait fortune a une partie du caractère requis pour faire des découvertes en philosophie, c'est-à-dire pour voir clair dans ce qui est' (sect. 39; XV, 54 f.).

He gives a long characterization of him, contrasting him with German innocence and inexperience. He says he marched through Europe 'with a Napoleonic tempo' and it has needed two generations to catch up with him (sect. 254; XV, 215). And Nietzsche includes him with Napoleon, Goethe, Beethoven, Heine and Schopenhauer as figures who transcend their nationalities (sect. 256; XV, 217 f.). And he quotes his aphorism 'différence engendre haine' (sect. 263; XV, 236).[2]

Perhaps the most noticeable effect of this reading of Stendhal is the increased freedom Nietzsche now allows himself in his formulations of his extreme personalist position. The Stendhalian cult of energy, of power, the egoistic disregard for all but personal well-being, the idea of the noble criminal, the admiration for the Julien Sorel type of personality, is one which appeals to Nietzsche, and which he feels constitutes a modern version of the ancient Greek and Renaissance 'Vornehmheit', which he has long cherished as his ideal.

[1] Nietzsche has not yet discovered Dostoevsky, whom he later couples with Stendhal as the other great modern psychologist.

[2] This is a remark of Julien's in *Le Rouge et le Noir* I, chap. 27 (ed. Cluny I, 211).

Stendhal's theory of beauty, too, he accepts immediately with acclamation. In the *Genealogie* (1887) he says:

'Schön ist, hat Kant gesagt, was *ohne Interesse* gefällt.' Ohne Interesse! Man vergleiche mit dieser Definition jene andere, die ein wirklicher 'Zuschauer' und Artist gemacht hat — Stendhal, der das Schöne einmal 'une promesse de bonheur' nennt.[1] Hier ist jedenfalls gerade das *abgelehnt*, und ausgestrichen, was Kant allein am aesthetischen Zustande hervorhebt: le désintéressement. Wer hat Recht, Kant oder Stendhal? ... Stendhal, wie gesagt, eine nicht weniger sinnliche, aber glücklicher gerathene Natur als Schopenhauer, hebt eine andere Wirkung des Schönen hervor: 'das Schöne *verspricht* Glück', ihm scheint gerade die *Erregung des Willens* (des 'Interesses') durch das Schöne der Thatbestand (III, sect. 6; XV, 379).

That he should play off Stendhal here not only against Kant, whom he has always despised, but also against Schopenhauer, shows the magnitude of the impression made on him. There is abundant mention of Stendhal in the *Nachlass* from these last years (XIV, 304; XVI, 148, 151, 341, 348, 375, 427; XVII, 349, 358, 363, 368). Often he is coupled with Dostoevsky, the two being the happiest discoveries of Nietzsche's life (e.g. *Götzendämmerung*, *Was den Deutschen abgeht*, sect. 45; XVII, 145).

In two ways, we may say, Stendhal is colouring Nietzsche's thought—in the abandonment of the metaphysical aesthetics he has cultivated in the past in favour of a purely sensationalist theory; and secondly in the elaboration of the ideal of 'Vornehmheit', with which is bound up Nietzsche's strong emphasis on the interpretation of life as the clash of power-centres, fighting to express the force they contain, which he sees admirably portrayed in Stendhal's novels. In the *Wille zur Macht* he continually quotes the latter as an example of the great man in the Napoleonic mould. And in *Ecce Homo* he gives this devoted summing-up of his love for him:

Stendhal, einer der schönsten Zufälle meines Lebens — denn Alles, was in ihm Epoche macht, hat der Zufall, niemals eine Empfehlung mir zugetrieben — ist ganz unschätzbar mit seinem vorwegnehmenden Psychologen-Auge ... endlich nicht am wenigsten als *ehrlicher* Atheist — eine in Frankreich spärliche und fast kaum auffindbare species — Prosper Mérimée in Ehren — Vielleicht bin ich selbst auf Stendhal neidisch? Er hat mir den besten Atheisten-Witz weggenommen, den gerade ich hätte machen können: 'die einzige Entschuldigung Gottes ist, dass er nicht existiert'. Ich selbst habe irgendwo gesagt; was war der grösste Einwand gegen das Dasein bisher? *Gott* (*Warum ich so klug bin*, sect. 3; XXI, 199).[2]

But it is not as an atheist that Nietzsche finds Stendhal so fascinating.

[1] The phrase occurs in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, 28 October (1854 ed., p. 30). Though it is here used in reference to women, and occurs elsewhere in the same context (*De l'Amour*, chap. 17, note; ed. Cluny, p. 71), Nietzsche builds on it a whole theory of aesthetics.

[2] This Stendhal-aphorism Nietzsche may have found in Bourget (*Essais* ..., p. 260).

Rather it is as the deepest psychologist and the most honest portrayer of the reality of life, the struggle for power, that he appeals to him. That is clear from the way Nietzsche speaks of him in the letters in the last years; he praises the way he gives Sorel the 'courage of his bad taste',[1] as the mark of the truly independent spirit, and once again couples him with Dostoevsky—the two being the only modern psychologists 'mit dem ich mich verstehe'.[2]

Stendhal, then, has both reinforced the example of Helvétius and Galiani, in encouraging Nietzsche to ever more positive formulations of his egoistic theory of human nature, and also provided him with an example in the nineteenth century, as Voltaire was in the eighteenth, and the whole of society in the seventeenth, of that 'Vornehmheit' for which he has been searching the whole of modern literature. Stendhal is the last great exponent of the ideal, in a time when decadence has almost completely conquered strength and personality. This is a more profound matter than the contribution actually made by Stendhal to Nietzsche's ideal of 'Vornehmheit'—though that was by no means small.

II

Apart from Gobineau, with whom we are concerned later, another contemporary French writer may have influenced Nietzsche at this time—Marie Jean Guyau, whose *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction* Nietzsche discusses in the *Nachlass* (XVI, 150, 153) and in the *Wille zur Macht* (sect. 340; XVIII, 240). Nietzsche possessed this book, and made very thorough marginal annotations in it.[3] Guyau's teaching, that life is primary, that in life activity and expansion are the fundamental laws, that the accumulation of power is the rule of the individual, is in some respects parallel to Nietzsche's. His final conclusion is that life is in essence 'expansibilité', that pleasure is only a by-product, not its aim, that the highest life is that which incorporates the greatest abundance and plenitude. This leads him to a certain 'immoralism', to a criticism of the utility of morality, which is similar to Nietzsche's. But the accumulation of power is not for Guyau, as it is for Nietzsche, a means to exercising it on others, but

[1] Cf. letter to Gast, 9 December, 1886 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 272). The reference is to *Le Rouge et le Noir* II, chap. 12 (ed. Cluny II, 105).

[2] Cf. the same letter to Gast, and another 13 February, 1887 (*Ges. Br.* IV, 280). At the end of his life Nietzsche was still reading Stendhal avidly (cf. letter to Gast 30 June, 1888; *Ges. Br.* IV, 387).

[3] For details of this see Fouillée op cit., especially pp. 151 ff. What follows is a summary of Fouillée's findings.

rather a means of *not* preying on others, but for uniting oneself with them:

> Nous avons constaté, jusque dans la vie de la cellule aveugle, un principe d'expansion qui fait que l'individu ne peut se suffir à lui-même: la vie la plus riche se trouve être aussi la plus portée à se prodiguer, à se sacrifier dans une certaine mesure, à se partager aux autres . . . (so that we find) . . . remplacé au fond même de l'être la source de tous les instincts de sympathie et de socialité (*Esquisse* . . . p. 25).

Against this passage Nietzsche puts this note, making clear the difference between them:

> Mais c'est là une complète misinterprétation. Sécrétions et excréments à part, tous les vivants veulent avant tout déployer leur puissance sur les autres (Fouillée, p. 137 f.).

Guyau shares Nietzsche's view of the primacy of instinct over conscience:

> . . . tout instinct tend à se détruire en devenant conscient (p. 53).

Nietzsche notes 'nota bene' against this (Fouillée, p. 160). And throughout the book Nietzsche has plainly read with careful attention and he writes in the margin such exclamations as 'Nota Bene!', 'Bravo!', 'Ecco!', 'Ja!', 'Moi!', 'Gut!' whenever he agrees. He writes 'Gut!', for instance, against this:

> Il y avait, dans le pari de Pascal, un élément qu'il n'a pas mis en lumière. Il n'a guère vu que la crainte du risque, il n'a pas vu le plaisir du risque (*Esquisse* . . . p. 219; Fouillée, p. 170).

And, indeed, Guyau's emphasis on the necessity of risk and danger in living is a conception of which he heartily approves.

Certainly, then, we can see that Nietzsche reads Guyau with delight from 1885 onwards. But his ideas are in no way changed by this reading. Guyau puts many of his dearest conceptions forcibly and cogently, and is therefore a welcome ally, but no more. Intellectually the two thinkers are on opposite sides of the fence, since for Nietzsche the 'expansibilité' of the individual issues in an urge to dominate others, while for Guyau it is the force driving individuals to co-operate.

12

In these years, then, during which the important theoretical works were written, the works which clarify and explain the poetic intuitions of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche can be seen to be deliberately soaking himself in French literature, not only the classical writers whom he had cultivated all his life, but now modern writers and particularly

those, like Stendhal and Guyau, who address themselves to the problems of psychology and its relation to moral philosophy. His French reading is enormously increased in range, but it is noticeable that there is no diminution in his reading of his old favourites—Montaigne, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, nor of such a man as Rousseau, whom he protests he hates. The more modern French writing he reads, the more he is driven back to reconsider the old writers. The problems he is dealing with at this time—the genealogy of morals, the psychology of the individual, the sociology of religious and ethical phenomena—are all strictly beyond the purview of the old moralists, and he rightly goes to modern thinkers for his study. But the principles and the intuitions on which he erects his theory are, as before, those of his early masters.

All these questions are only aspects of the fundamental inquiry which now engages him—the genealogy of cultures and civilizations, the 'natural history' of human society and the technique of 'Züchtung' of humanity. This quest leads him to a thorough consideration of the essential qualities of European culture of recent centuries, in an attempt to discover the law of growth and decay which it exemplifies, and here once again it is France which he chooses as his field of study. So we find him at this time conducting a careful investigation into the history of French culture, in his attempt to answer the question: what produces decadence?

Chapter 9

CULTURE AND DECADENCE

I

DURING these last years Nietzsche's thoughts revolve more and more around the problem of human culture, and all the works after the *Genealogie* are directly or indirectly concerned with it. It is inevitable that Wagner should play an important rôle in these speculations. In the last part of 1887 Nietzsche was thinking deeply about the problems of modern man, elaborating his conception of 'Züchtung', to train humanity to fulfil its cultural task, and attempting a diagnosis of the weakness and debility of modern culture. He is driven in this connection to review the significance of Wagner's music, which seems to him so typical of the degeneracy of the time, and his own relation to it. He has not at any time been able to put Wagner behind him, to treat him as beneath consideration. It becomes clearer than ever that he must once and for all take up a position on the Wagner-question. So in May and June 1888 the *Fall Wagner* was written, and appeared in September. He considers Wagner here as symptomatic of modern decadence and debility, linking him to Schopenhauer and romanticism, all of them symptoms of that cultivation of comfortable and depersonalized illusion which is the hall-mark of modern culture. The book was misinterpreted as a new direction in Nietzsche's thought, an unjustified rounding on his old master, an ungrateful and spiteful attack on a man who had helped him much and always loved him. To rebut the accusation Nietzsche followed this book with another at the end of the year, *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, a mosaic of sections from his previous works in which he had already expressed his detestation of his erstwhile master. He shortens and modifies, but in general his argument is fairly illustrated—that the attitude of the *Fall Wagner* is in no sense a new one, but has been more than hinted at from the second part of *Menschliches* onwards.

But before that he had produced other works. This last year (1888) of his intellectual life was by far the most productive. In August and September *Götzendämmerung* was written. In September, too, *Der Antichrist*, which became so notorious. It is, like *Der Fall Wagner*, a selection of the material he has been accumulating for years or the

great major work which was never written, and was composed now as the first of four books which would make his philosophy clear and coherent. Finally, in October and November, *Ecce Homo* came into being, the last of his works, and the one in which signs of his growing megalomania are most apparent. During the summer he had written also the *Dionysos-Dithyramben*, and throughout the whole year many sections, sketches and plans were added to the large pile of notebooks and papers for the great unwritten work, the *Wille zur Macht*.

Growing mental disturbance is also apparent in many of the letters from this year. Yet there is no loss of clarity, indeed, the works of this year are written in a style more scintillating, more dazzling, and often intellectually clearer than any previous ones. Nietzsche's thought here shows the same qualities as those noticed in the books from *Zarathustra* onwards—the criticism of his time, of morality, of religion, of philosophy is the same, if expressed now more absolutely and more excitedly. And the fundamental values on which it is based are unchanged. But a new emphasis is apparent on the mystical figure of Dionysos, as the incorporation of that 'pessimism of strength' which is his ideal.

2

Apart from the ancient Greeks, only the men of the Italian Renaissance incorporated to the full Nietzsche's ideal of culture, that total self-expression which carries with it the danger and egoism, but also the power and richness of a way of life based on non-moral presuppositions. This passage from *Götzendämmerung* is typical of his view:

> Die Zeiten sind zu messen nach ihren *positiven Kräften* — und dabei ergiebt sich jene so verschwenderische und verhängnissreiche Zeit der Renaissance als die letzte *grosse* Zeit . . . (*Streifzüge*, sect. 37; XVII, 135).

Everything in history since the Renaissance, he felt, was a decline, with a temporary halt in seventeenth-century France, where some part of the sovereign freedom of the personality was regained. In his cultivation of the Renaissance Nietzsche is, of course, very much in line with contemporary trends of thought. Burckhardt had published his famous books on it and had been lecturing on it while Nietzsche was at Basle. At this time, too, C. F. Meyer was writing his stories, which revolve round just this problem of the amoral power-seeking individual. The cult of the Renaissance was a contemporary fashion.

But in Nietzsche's case it goes much deeper than usual—he is quite serious in his proposal to throw 'morality' overboard, and to embrace the danger this entails. Here he is following in the main the pointers of Stendhal, but it is probable that Gobineau has also contributed to the picture of the Renaissance in his mind. The characters in the latter's *Renaissance* are continually expressing sentiments of which Nietzsche so heartily approves. Machiavelli, in one place, says characteristically:

> . . . quand on peut agir, il faut agir. L'action seule est digne d'un homme (*La Renaissance*—ed Monaco, 1947, p. 42).

And the Pope Alexander VI outlines his fundamental beliefs to his daughter Lucrezia Borgia in these terms:

> Sachez désormais que pour ces sortes de personnes que la destinée appelle à dominer sur les autres, les règles ordinaires de la vie se renversent et le devoir devient tout différent. Le bien, le mal, se transportent ailleurs, plus haut, dans un autre milieu, et les mérites qui se peuvent approuver dans une femme ordinaire deviendraient chez vous des vices, par cela seul qu'ils ne seraient que des causes d'achoppement, de ruine. Or, la grande loi du monde, ce n'est pas de faire ceci ou cela, d'éviter ce point ou de courir à tel autre; c'est de vivre, de grandir et de développer ce qu'on a en soi de plus énergique et de plus grand, de telle sorte que d'une sphère quelconque on sache toujours s'efforcer de passer dans une plus large, plus aerée, plus haute (ibid., p. 101).

Here the doctrine of 'beyond good and evil' is combined with the antithesis of 'lords' and 'slaves', and also with that egoistic cult of the individual which is so strongly marked in Nietzsche. Doubtless he was delighted to see here in another his own conceptions so brilliantly expressed in characteristic action. And the more attractive side of Nietzsche's doctrine is equally in evidence in Gobineau, as when Machiavelli says:

> Tenir en bride non pas tant les autres que soi-même, c'est le mérite des forts (ibid., p. 169).

And the artists express very Nietzschean sentiments. Perhaps it is Gobineau's representation of the essential similarity of these to the men of action of the Renaissance which most impressed Nietzsche. That the *condottieri* were great in the amoral, egoistic way that Stendhal and Gobineau believe—this possibly erroneous opinion was commonly held, and had the support of Burckhardt. But of the three it is Gobineau who most clearly and persuasively argued that not only the men of action, but the painters and sculptors and poets also shared this mentality and lived in the same full-blooded way. And for this pointer Nietzsche cannot but be grateful. Furthermore,

the sense of a sudden degeneration is well portrayed in the last two sections of the *Renaissance*, heralded by Bibbiena's ominous words:

> Toute société cultivée est une société corrompue (ibid., p. 347).

There is a plain implication that the strength and nobility of the Renaissance carried with it a tendency to disintegration, that decadence is inseparable from cultural progress, which is exactly Nietzsche's own conviction. Machiavelli sadly expresses the truth in a conversation with Michelangelo, who bemoans the growing licence and immorality, adding 'Je sais que dans nos jeunes ans on tuait de même'. To which Machiavelli replies:

> Avec une grande différence: alors la vie sortait de la mort, et aujourd'hui ce qui sort de la mort, c'est une autre mort (ibid., p. 404).

Nowhere else could Nietzsche see realized so clearly the ultimate relation between the heights and the depths, between the noble freedom and power of the 'great' age and the chaotic incoherence of the decadence to which its very strength makes it a victim. And this is another pointer of great significance in his later thought.

But it is unlikely that, apart from helping to form his mental picture of the Renaissance, Gobineau exercised any profound influence on Nietzsche. In his aristocratic temper of mind, his individualism, his hatred of democracy, he is, of course, a welcome and admired guide, but his teaching is at variance with Nietzsche's on fundamental points. He opens the *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* by considering the idea of decadence and defines it as a physiological matter, brought about by the dilution of 'noble' blood by continuous intermarrying through the generations with other races (*Essai* I, p. 24). Nietzsche's whole conception of decadence is based on totally different fundamental analyses. Miscegenation, and the question of blood-mixture, do not enter into his theory at all.[1] Gobineau divides humanity into 'lords' and 'slaves' in the same way as Nietzsche does, and it is perhaps true to say that his resolute pursuit of this idea encourages the latter in his parallel line of thought. In the *Essai* Gobineau says:

> Voici donc l'humanité partagée en deux fractions très dissemblables, très inégales, ou, pour mieux dire, en une série de catégories subordonnées les unes aux autres, et où le degré d'intelligence marque le degré d'élévation (*Essai* I, 186).

[1] There are some passages in Nietzsche (e.g. *Wille zur Macht*, sects. 132, 868) which can be interpreted in a racialist spirit, but they are not typical of his general line of thought. Indeed, any such mechanical law of degeneration as Gobineau postulated would make nonsense of Nietzsche's whole cultural ideal and the ethic of the Superman.

In *Les Pléiades* he divides humanity into four groups, but these four categories can finally be reduced to two—the higher men ('fils de roi') and the others. His classification is thus like Nietzsche's. But notice that the distinguishing mark of the higher category is its greater *intelligence*. This is worlds away from Nietzsche's emphasis on the *will*, on the instinct of power which marks out the 'lord'. Without the idea of 'Vornehmheit', which is not an intellectual quality at all, the whole conception of higher and lower men remains a mechanical and fruitless absurdity. And, of course, Gobineau's 'fils de roi' are so simply because they have certain pure blood—a physical and mechanical criterion totally different from Nietzsche's. It is similar to the 'milieu' theory which Nietzsche so much despised, with the accident of blood substituted for the accident of environment. It is finally hopeless. Nothing could better bring this out than the concluding words of the *Essai*:

> La prévision attristante, ce n'est pas la mort, c'est la certitude de n'y arriver que dégradés; et peut-être même cette honte réservée à nos descendants nous pourrait-elle laisser insensibles, si nous n'éprouvions, par une secrète horreur, que les mains rapaces de la destinée sont déjà posées sur nous (*Essai* II, 563 f.).

Nothing could be farther than this hopeless pessimism from Nietzsche's vision of the Superman.

Gobineau, we may say, gave Nietzsche valuable pointers about the Renaissance, and perhaps set him thinking more deeply about the nature of history and of human decadence, but his theory is in essentials radically different from Nietzsche's and can have had no profound influence on it.

3

The conception of culture involves that of decadence, and Nietzsche's ideas about the decadence of modern man are being much more elaborately worked out than previously. As always, Rousseau is the great scapegoat. In the *Wille zur Macht* Nietzsche sees him as the direct link between the eighteenth century and the present day. He describes the 'romantic' attitude of modern man and outlines his view of the eighteenth century as a time when the principles represented by Rousseau met and conquered those represented by Voltaire, the emotions conquered the reason, the 'slaves' conquered the 'lords'—all culminating in the Revolution and leading directly to the modern situation (sect. 62; XVIII, 54 f.). Rousseau represents the herd-mentality which triumphed over the old aristocratic temper of

mind (sect. 94; XVIII, 71). Nietzsche sums up the last three centuries in slogans:

Die drei Jahrhunderte. Ihre verschiedene *Sensibilität* drückt sich am besten so aus: *Aristokratismus*: Descartes. Herrschaft der *Vernunft*. Zeugniss von der Souveränetät des *Willens*.

Feminismus: Rousseau. Herrschaft des *Gefühls*. Zeugniss von der Souveränetät der *Sinne*, verlogen.

Animalismus: Schopenhauer. Herrschaft der *Begierde*. Zeugniss von der Souveränetät der *Animalität*, redlicher, aber düster (sect. 95; XVIII, 72).

There is this to be said for the nineteenth century:

In summa: es giebt Anzeichen dafür, dass der Europäer des 19. Jahrhunderts sich weniger seiner Instinkte schämt: er hat einen guten Schritt dazu gemacht, sich einmal seine unbedingte Natürlichkeit d.h. seine Unmoralität einzugestehen, *ohne Erbitterung*; im Gegentheil, stark genug dazu, diesen Anblick noch auszuhalten.

Das klingt in gewissen Ohren, wie als ob die *Korruption* fortgeschritten wäre: und gewiss ist, dass der Mensch sich nicht der 'Natur' angenähert hat, von der *Rousseau* redet, sondern einen Schritt weiter gethan hat in der Zivilisation, welche er *prehorrezierte*. Wir haben uns verstärkt: wir sind dem 17. Jahrhundert wieder näher gekommen, dem Geschmack seines Endes namentlich (Dancourt, Lesage, Regnard) (sect. 120; XVIII, 91).

Nietzsche is at pains to show Rousseau's enormous influence on our history and cannot blink the fact that the nineteenth century, with its mediocrity and vulgarity and romanticism, which he despises, but also with its 'Vernatürlichung', which he thinks hopeful, springs directly from the struggles of the eighteenth, the Rousseau-Voltaire 'battle'. This he uses as a succinct way of summing up the turning-point in modern history. He feels that the task of the nineteenth century is to 'overcome' the eighteenth, and Goethe, Napoleon and Schopenhauer are all fighters in this battle (sect. 1,017; XIX, 343). That he felt himself also to be in the same ranks is clear:

Mein Kampf gegen das 18. Jahrhundert Rousseaus, gegen seine 'Natur', seinen 'guten Menschen', seinen Glauben an die Herrschaft des Gefühls — gegen die Verweichlichung, Schwächung, Vermoralisierung des Menschen: ein Ideal, das aus dem *Hass gegen die aristokratische Cultur* geboren ist, und in praxi die Herrschaft der zügellosen Ressentiments-Gefühle ist, erfunden als Standarte für den Kampf (sect. 1,021; XIX, 347 f.; cf. also sects. 123, 747; XVIII, 92; XIX, 176 ff.).

4

In this comparison of Rousseau and Voltaire, Nietzsche invariably aligns himself with the latter, with 'Cultur' against 'Uncultur', with the spirit of 'Vornehmheit' against that of the 'canaille'. The 'cultured' times and societies—ancient Greece, the Renaissance, the

French seventeenth century—are held up as fine achievements from which modern civilization has declined, and Nietzsche sets himself far more carefully than before to discover the reason for this. So we find him reviewing the writers who mean so much to him, and summing up the history of culture. In *Ecce Homo* he says of the Germans:

> Sie haben nie ein siebzehntes Jahrhundert harter Selbstprüfung durchgemacht wie die Franzosen — ein La Rochefoucauld, ein Descartes sind hundertmal in Rechtschaffenheit den ersten Deutschen überlegen (on the *Fall Wagner*, sect. 3; XXI, 272).

This mention of Descartes is significant, especially as we have noticed Nietzsche choosing him as typical of the aristocratic culture of the seventeenth century. Up to the time of the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche has not shown any deep interest in him. Now, in these last years, he pays more and more attention to him, and though he remains as antipathetic as ever, he does deal with his thought much more carefully. He introduces a discussion of him in *Jenseits* thus:

> Es giebt immer noch harmlose Selbst-Beobachter, welche glauben, dass es 'unmittelbare Gewissheiten' gebe, zum Beispiel 'ich denke' oder, wie es der Aberglaube Schopenhauers war, 'ich will' (and this he denies) (sect. 16; XV, 22 f.).

He analyses the 'cogito ergo sum' in this and the following sections, and later speaks of Descartes as:

> . . . den Vater des Rationalismus (und folglich Grossvater der Revolution), welcher der Vernunft allein Authorität zuerkannte: aber die Vernunft ist nur ein Werkzeug und Descartes war oberflächlich (sect. 191; XV, 117).

This is a good example of the way Nietzsche is now concerned to fit the authors he considers into a comprehensive system, to assign to each one his rôle in the historical development of culture. The real meaning of the sentence above lies much more in the bracketed reference to the Revolution than in the anti-intellectualist argument, which has long been familiar. There is continual reference to Descartes in the *Nachlass* from the last years, and in the *Wille zur Macht* he is continually criticized (cf. sects. 468, 484, 533, 577; XIX, 5, 19, 43, 68). All this preoccupation with a thinker with whom Nietzsche had always little sympathy is evidence not of any change in his attitude, but rather of his determination to leave no great figure of the seventeenth century unanalysed, since he hopes thus to determine the essential quality of that noble period.

These years, indeed, see Nietzsche turning his attention to all sorts of writers whom he had mentioned rarely, if ever, before. Boileau, for instance, is mentioned in a letter to Gast of 27 June, 1887 (*Ges. Br.*

IV, 308). And there are in the *Nachlass* references to Calvin (XVII, 333), and, surprisingly, Ronsard (XVII, 343). Mme de Guyon, whom Nietzsche had included in his survey of the Christian strain in French thought in *Morgenröthe* (sect. 192; X, 173, quoted p. xii above) is alluded to again in *Jenseits* (sect. 50; XV, 71). We have already noticed the reference to Saint-Évremond as typical of the 'Vornehmheit' of the seventeenth century. And there is an extremely revealing passage in *Ecce Homo*:

> Im Grunde ist es eine kleine Anzahl älterer Franzosen, zu denen ich immer wieder zurückkehre: ich glaube nur an französische Bildung . . . dass ich Pascal nicht lese, sondern *liebe*[1] . . . dass ich Etwas von Montaignes Muthwillen im Geiste, wer weiss, vielleicht auch im Leibe habe . . . dass mein Artisten-Geschmack die Namen Molière Corneille und Racine nicht ohne Ingrimm gegen ein wüstes Genie wie Shakespeare in Schutz nimmt, das schliesst zuletzt nicht aus, dass mir nicht auch die allerletzten Franzosen eine charmante Gesellschaft wären (and he goes on to discuss modern French literature) (*Warum ich so klug bin*, sect. 3; XXI, 198, quoted p. xv above).

There are several references to Molière in these years, and the word 'Tartüfferie' is a favourite one to describe the falsifications of the 'morality' Nietzsche attacks. Corneille is mentioned in the *Fall Wagner* (sect. 9; XVII, 27), and in the *Nachlass*, on Victor Hugo, Nietzsche says:

> . . . er ist damit auf der entgegengesetzten Bahn und will gerade das Umgekehrte von Dem, was die Dichter einer vornehmen Cultur, wie zum Beispiel Corneille, von sich wollten. Denn diese hatten ihren Genuss und Ehrgeiz daran, ihre vielleicht noch stärker gearteten Sinne mit dem *Begriffe* zu überwältigen und gegen die brutalen Ansprüche von Farben, Tönen und Gestalten einer feinen hellen Geistigkeit zum Siege zu verhelfen: womit sie, wie mich dünkt, auf der Spur der grossen Griechen waren, so wenig sie gerade davon gewusst haben mögen (*Nachlass* XVII, 360).

Here the French seventeenth century is explicitly linked to the Greeks, and that by precisely the desire to form and shape the immediate experience and impression, the 'colours, sounds and shapes' which men like Rousseau encouraged and yielded to. Nietzsche mentions other writers of this time too, such as Mme de Sévigné (*Nachlass* XVI, 419), and the three (Dancourt, Lesage and Regnard) who were given as examples of the nobility of the century's close (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 120; XVIII, 91).

Nietzsche has plainly derived his ideas about culture very largely from a consideration of the French seventeenth century. This is no new departure in his thought, but he seems determined now to

[1] Cf. Nietzsche's letters to Brandes 20 November and 23 November, 1888 (*Ges. Br.* III, 322, 325), where similar terms are used.

produce as much evidence as he can of the qualities he admires, and his examples are almost always taken from this period—the last in modern times when 'culture' was possible, when 'Vornehmheit' was a quality of the whole of society, and not just of isolated individuals (like Stendhal at a later date), when the human personality was still able to express itself unencumbered by the weight of mediocrity and vulgarity.

5

The actual ideal of 'Vornehmheit' as an individual quality, which Nietzsche is now elaborating, owes more than we have hitherto noticed to La Rochefoucauld. We have considered his influence so far as lying in the direction of questioning accepted moral judgments and showing up self-deception. Now we can see the other, more constructive, side of his thought:

An La Rochefoucauld schimmert eine sehr *noble* Denkart der damaligen Gesellschaft hindurch; er selber ist ein enttäuschter Idealist, der nach Anleitung des *Christenthums* den *hasslichen* Namen der damaligen Triebfedern hervorsucht (*Nachlass* XVI, 145).

Disregarding the point about Christianity, we can see that Nietzsche is attracted by what he calls the 'noble' way of thinking of La Rochefoucauld. This is, perhaps, surprising in view of the common conception of the latter as a cynical, embittered failure who revenged himself on his fellow-men by emphasizing the selfishness and dishonesty in the motives of the best of them. Yet Nietzsche's instinct here is unerringly right. There is in La Rochefoucauld a very deeply-felt positive ideal which comes in Nietzsche's mind to outweigh the rather self-conscious cynicism which first attracted him. La Rochefoucauld's moral ideal is that of the 'honnête homme', that of the society in which he lived, but it is shot through with the conviction of the continual necessity for struggle to be honest with oneself, to live up to oneself, but not beyond oneself. Sincerity is for him the highest good:

La sincérité est une ouverture de coeur. On la trouve en fort peu de gens; et celle que l'on trouve d'ordinaire n'est qu'une fine dissimulation pour attirer la confiance des autres (2).

This plainly does not mean that sincerity is deception, but that what passes commonly for it is dishonest, while the genuine quality is of supreme value. Nietzsche's own exaltation of honesty as the highest good betrays a moral conscience similar to La Rochefoucauld's. 'Become what thou art' is a parallel exhortation to the latter's, to be

all of a piece, to have no false constructions and masks around one. But there is a greater similarity than this. La Rochefoucauld's plea for sincerity is coupled with a very definite ideal of 'Vornehmheit' in Nietzsche's sense:

> Il y a une élévation qui ne dépend point de la fortune; c'est un certain air qui nous distingue et qui semble nous destiner aux grandes choses; c'est un prix que nous nous donnons imperceptiblement à nous-mêmes; c'est par cette qualité que nous usurpons les déférences des autres hommes et c'est elle d'ordinaire qui nous met plus au-dessus d'eux que la naissance, les dignités et le mérite même (399).

This is very near to Nietzsche's distinction between 'lords' and 'slaves', and though it cannot be said that he derived this from the Frenchman, it is plain that 'Vornehmheit' is a conception composed of many strands, one of which leads back to La Rochefoucauld. When the latter says: 'Le vrai honnête homme est celui qui ne se pique de rien' (203) he appears to be diametrically opposed to Nietzsche, whose 'vornehme Mensch' is proud of himself exclusively. But the contradiction is only apparent; La Rochefoucauld's verb here means to lay claim to a quality one does not possess. The *honnête homme* is not proud of himself because he does not need to be, in order to be respected. He is sure and certain and need convince neither himself nor others. This view, that the noble man is marked out without any effort on his part, which is so akin to Nietzsche's own, is shown by such *maximes* as:

> Il n'appartient qu'aux grands hommes d'avoir de grands défauts (190).

It is plain that the aristocratic tendency of La Rochefoucauld's ideal is as marked as the glorification of complete sincerity which we have seen. And both these qualities have influenced Nietzsche in the elaboration of his own ideal. For this reason it is mistaken to think of La Rochefoucauld's influence on him simply as the exposure of the moral imposture of our thinking. The other, more fruitful, qualities we have seen played as important a part in helping to form Nietzsche's conception of morals and of man.

6

From this high period of 'Vornehmheit', the seventeenth century, there has been a steady decline until the present day. The eighteenth century saw the battle fought out between Rousseau and Voltaire. Apart from these two, Nietzsche refers to and discusses Fontenelle, Mirabeau, Diderot, Mme Roland, Condillac and Ducis, as well as Helvétius and Chamfort, whose impact on him we have already

considered. Most of these figures are familiar ones to him, but it is only during these last years that his knowledge of nineteenth-century French literature attained its full depth and extent. The great masters are, of course, already his constant companions, but now he begins to read all the modern French literature he can find. Apart from Stendhal, he reads Mérimée still with avidity. He quotes him again in the *Genealogie* (II, sect. 5; XV, 328), and describes him in the *Nachlass* in these terms:

> . . . ein vornehmer, zurückgezogener Artist und Verächter jener schwammichten Gefühle, welche ein demokratisches Zeitalter als seine 'edelsten Gefühle' preist . . . eine echte, wenngleich nicht reinliche Seele, in einer unechten und schmutzigen Umgebung (XVII, 349; cf. also *Fall Wagner*, sect. 2; XVII, 9).

Mérimée, in short, is a faithful follower of Stendhal, keeping alive in the mediocrity and vulgarity of the nineteenth century something of the fineness and forcefulness of an earlier nobler time.

About nineteenth-century thinkers Nietzsche has cutting things to say. He sums up his attitude to some of them:

> . . . in Frankreich kam das christliche Ideal, soweit es nur die blasse Sonne des Nordens erlaubt hat, zum Ausblühen. Wie fremdartig fromm sind unserm Geschmack selbst diese letzten französischen Skeptiker noch, sofern etwas keltisches Blut in ihrer Abkunft ist! Wie katholisch, wie undeutsch riecht uns Auguste Comtes Soziologie mit ihrer römischen Logik der Instinkte.[1] Wie jesuitisch jener liebenswürdige und kluge Cicerone von Port-Royal, Sainte-Beuve, trotz all seiner Iesuiten-Feindschaft! Und gar Ernst Renan: wie unzugänglich klingt uns Nord-Jändern die Sprache solch eines Renan, in dem alle Augenblicke irgend ein Nichts von religiöser Spannung seine in feinerem Sinne wollüstige und bequem sich bettende Seele um ihr Gleichgewicht bringt . . . (*Jenseits*, sect. 48; XV, 70).

He points out Comte's great error in this passage:

> *Hauptgesichtspunkt*: dass man nicht die *Aufgabe* der höheren Species in der *Leitung* der niederen sieht (wie es z.B. Comte macht), sondern die niedere als *Basis*, auf der eine höhere Species ihrer *eigenen* Aufgabe lebt — auf der sie erst *stehen kann* (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 901; XIX, 286).

This very important integration of the tasks of the higher and the lower species is a cardinal part of Nietzsche's thought on culture and decadence.

Renan appears in Nietzsche's work for the first time in the *Nachlass* from the *Zarathustra* time (1882–5):

> Spott gegen die Idealisten, welche dort die 'Wahrheit' glauben, wo sie sich 'gut' oder 'erhaben' fühlen. Classisch Renan, citirt bei Bourget (XIV, 285).[2]

[1] In *Morgenröthe* we have, of Comte: '. . . und Letzterer hat mit seinem berühmten Moralformel vivre pour autrui in der That das Christenthum überchristlicht' (sect. 132; X, 125).

[2] Nietzsche knew Bourget's essay on Renan in *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*.

And in the passage in *Jenseits* where he discusses French thinkers, he goes on to quote from Renan:

> Man spreche ihm einmal diese schönen Sätze nach — und was für Bosheit und Uebermuth regt sich sofort in unserer wahrscheinlich weniger schönen und härteren, nämlich deutscheren Seele als Antwort! — 'disons donc hardiment, que la religion est un produit de l'homme normal, que l'homme est le plus dans le vrai quand il est le plus religieux et le plus assuré d'une destinée infinie. C'est quand il est bon qu'il veut que la vertu corresponde à un ordre éternel, c'est quand il contemple les choses d'une manière désintéressée qu'il trouve la mort révoltante et absurde. Comment ne pas supposer que c'est dans ces moments-là que l'homme voit le mieux'[1] — Diese Sätze sind meinen Ohren und Gewohnheiten so sehr *antipodisch*, dass, als ich sie fand, mein erster Ingrimm daneben schrieb 'la niaiserie religeuse par excellence' — bis mein letzter Ingrimm sie gar noch lieb gewann, diese Sätze mit ihrer auf den Kopf gestellten Wahrheit! (sect. 48; XV, 70).

In the *Streifzüge* Nietzsche concludes a long analysis:

> Dieser Geist Renans, ein Geist, der *entnervt*, ist ein Verhängniss mehr für das arme, kranke, willenskranke Frankreich (sect. 2; XVII, 107 f.).

And the same view occurs repeatedly in the *Wille zur Macht* and elsewhere.[2] Nietzsche appears to have studied Renan fairly extensively during these years, but always with dislike and only to gather ammunition for his analysis of decadence.[3]

He still refers frequently to Sainte-Beuve, though with increasing contempt. He is one of those who are 'nicht mehr möglich' (*Nachlass* XVI, 385), and in the long letter to Gast on Rousseau and his deadly influence, Sainte-Beuve is given as one of his 'school' (*Ges. Br.* IV, 340). The *Streifzüge* contains a long analysis of him as a weak, feminine figure, plebian and thus romantic, 'eine Vorform Baudelaires' (sect. 3; XVII, 108 f.).

Everywhere he looks Nietzsche finds the great qualities of French civilization being betrayed, the noble individualism degenerating into a weak feminine will-lessness and romanticism. Writers like George Sand and Mme de Stael he regards as typical of this (cf. *Jenseits*, sects. 209, 232, 233, 244; XV, 151, 183, 199, etc.). And his most terrible prognostications he finds realized when he turns to the romantic poets. Musset is included in a general condemnation in *Jenseits* (sect. 269; XV, 243f.). De Vigny and Lamartine are similarly scorned (*Wille zur Macht*, sects. 103, 1,020; XVIII, 81; XIX, 246).

[1] Nietzsche was probably led to this passage in Renan by Bourget's essay, which quotes the first part of it (*Essais*, p. 78 f.).

[2] Cf. other mentions of Renan: *Streifzuge*, sect. 6 (XVII, 111); *Antichrist*, sects. 17, 29, 31, 32 (XVII, 186, 203, 206 f.); *Wille zur Macht*, sect. 128 (XVIII, 96); *Nachlass* (XVII, 350, 358, 365).

[3] His library contained *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*, and a translation of *Philosophische Dialoge und Fragmente*. It is probable that he also knew at least the *Vie de Jésus*.

Hugo is frequently referred to, and always with deep antipathy. He is one of the 'school' of Rousseau described in the letter to Gast (*Ges Br.* IV, 340). He typifies the 'Herdeninstinkt' of modern French writing (*Nachlass* XVI, 329). And again and again Nietzsche sees in him the pernicious quality he recognizes in Wagner.[1] In the *Streifzüge* he is one of 'Meine Unmöglichen' (sect. 1; XVII, 107). Elsewhere he is described in similar terms (*Nachlass* XVII, 308, 326, 348, 360). The *Wille zur Macht* continues the attack. Hugo is typical of the romantic attitude of modern man (sect. 62; XVIII, 54); he and Wagner are both charlatans (sect. 825; XIX, 231), and finally:

> Die Note des Mitleids, der Ehrfurcht selbst vor allem, was leidend, niedrig, verachtet, verfolgt gelebt hat, klingt über allen anderen Noten weg (Typen: Victor Hugo und Richard Wagner) (sect. 864; XIX, 262).

Baudelaire is another poet whom Nietzsche began reading in these last years. In the *Nachlass* from the time of *Jenseits* (1885–7) he quotes from the *Journal Intime*:

> Moi, je dis: la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour gît dans la certitude de faire le *mal*. Et l'homme et la femme savent, de naissance, que dans le mal se trouve toute volupté (XIV, 414).

In the *Wille zur Macht* he describes the effect of Rousseau in the rise of the slaves and the weak:

> Dazu kommt der Fluch auf die Wollust (Baudelaire und Schopenhauer) (sect. 94; XVIII, 71),

and in another sketch of this time he asks:

> Wer war der erste *intelligente* Anhänger Wagner's überhaupt? Charles Baudelaire, derselbe der zuerst Delacroix verstand, jener typische décadent, in dem sich ein ganzes Geschlecht von Artisten wiedererkannt hat — er war vielleicht auch der letzte (*Nachlass* XXI, 203; cf. also Nietzsche's letter to Gast, 26 February, 1888; *Ges Br.* IV, 358).

In all this it is plain that Baudelaire is anathema to Nietzsche precisely because of the affinity between him and Wagner, both of them typical examples of that romantic decadence which has afflicted modern man so shamefully.[2]

Another pair of writers typical of modern decadence are the Goncourt brothers, with whom Nietzsche occupies himself considerably during these years. The *Nachlass* from the time of *Zarathustra* and

[1] *Fall Wagner*, sects. 8, 11; *Nachschrift* (XVII, 25, 33, 37); *Wille zur Macht*, sect. 838 (XIX, 237 f.).

[2] His library contained only the *Fleurs du Mal*, but he is plainly acquainted with more of Baudelaire's work than this. His view of the poet is largely coloured by his reading of Bourget's essay on him.

Jenseits (1882–7) is sprinkled with references to them. Nietzsche discusses the Magny dinners and describes the guests at them:

. . . ich kenne diese Herren auswendig, *so sehr* dass ich sie eigentlich bereits satt habe. Man muss radikaler sein; im Grunde fehlt es bei Allen an der Hauptsache — 'la force' (*Ges Br.* IV, 337, to Gast, 10 November, 1887).

Here once again is the old criticism—that modern culture is weak and spineless, that its debility is in no way redeemed by its extreme sensitivity and fineness of apprehension—that indeed the over-sensitivity and the essential lack of power are bound up together and inseparable. Nietzsche brackets the Goncourts frequently with the romantics, and once again the trump card is played—they are linked to Wagner (*Fall Wagner*, sect. 7; XVII, 23). In the *Nachlass* he says:

Auf die Schule der romantisme ist in Frankreich gefolgt l'école du document humain (*wissenschaftliche Hysterie*, sage ich). Der Urheber des Ausdrucks ist Edmond de Goncourt. Consequenz: die *Wissenschaftliche* Lust des Menschen an *sich selber* — das Unwissenschaftliche daran ist die Lust am Ausnahmefall (XVII, 353).

In the *Wille zur Macht* he has another criticism:

Es giebt keine pessimistische Kunst — Die Kunst bejaht. Hiob bejaht — aber Zola? Aber die Goncourt? — Die Dinge sind hässlich, die sie zeigen: aber *dass* die dieselben zeigen ist aus *Lust an diesem Hässlichen* (sect. 821; XIX, 229).[1]

In short the Goncourts are a typical product of modern decadent sensibility going with a total lack of personality and force—the very antithesis of Nietzsche's ideal.

Other modern writers fare little better. Flaubert is put firmly in his place in the *Fall Wagner*:

Würden Sie es glauben, dass die Wagnerischen Heroinen sammt und sonders, sobald man nur erst den heroischen Balg abgestreift hat, zum Verwechseln Madame Bovary ähnlich sehen! . . . (sect. 9; XVII, 29).

Many other allusions are in the same strain.[2] It is plain that Nietzsche reads Flaubert at this time mainly as part of his study of the various examples of the modern spirit which he feels incorporated in Wagner.

The only historian whom he admired was Taine.[3] He was, in fact, one of the few contemporary writers whom Nietzsche respected, and he corresponded frequently with him. The beginning of their relationship was Taine's letter to him of 17 October, 1886, thanking

[1] Cf. in similar strain *Nachlass* (XVII, 358, 366 f.); *Wille zur Macht*, sects. 82, 455, 915 (XVIII, 64, 323; XIX, 291). Nietzsche's library contained a good selection of the Goncourts' books: *Idées et Sensations*, Vols. 2 and 3 of the *Journal*, *Renée Mauperin* (in translation), *Charles Demailly*, *La Femme au 18 ième siècle*, and the *Histoire de la société française*. Nietzsche also knew Bourget's essay on them.

[2] Flaubert is called 'a new edition of Pascal' in *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (*Wir Antipoden* XVII, 286).

[3] Michelet is rarely mentioned, and always unfavourably.

him for *Jenseits*. In the same month Nietzsche writes to his mother, comparing Taine to Burckhardt (*Ges. Br.* V, 698), and in *Jenseits* he calls him the greatest living historian (sect. 254; XV, 214), while the *Genealogie* mentions his 'strength of soul' (II, sect. 19; XV, 422). It is at this time (1886–7) that Nietzsche and Rohde exchange letters about him—Rohde daring to criticize him, which greatly annoyed Nietzsche. In one of these letters (23 May, 1887) Nietzsche says:

> Es kommt dazu, dass Taine, ausser Burckhardt, in langen Jahren der Einzige gewesen ist, der mir ein herzhaftes und theilnehmendes Wort über meine Schriften gesagt hat. . . . Wir sind in der That gründlich aufeinander angewiesen, als drei gründliche Nihilisten (*Ges Br.* II, 582).

In the *Nachlass* he analyses Taine's work, which derives, he says, from Stendhal and Hegel and happily counteracts the influence of Sainte-Beuve and Renan (XVII, 350). And there are many other references to Taine in the works and letters. It is probable that Nietzsche was extensively acquainted with his works.[1] He was no doubt attracted to him in the first place by the fact that he was one of the few who appreciated his work, and also by his uncompromising hostility to the pernicious current of thought which Sainte-Beuve and Renan exemplified, and which ran through so much of modern French literature—the romantic decadence of which Wagner was the fountain-head.

Of other moderns Nietzsche has cutting things to say. Zola represents 'Die Freude zu stinken' (*Streifzüge*, sect. 1; XVII, 107), and all Nietzsche's other references to this novelist are scornful. He has a certain liking for Doudan, whom he frequently quotes.[2] The one thing to be said in favour of the modern spirit is that it has brought a number of delicate psychologists in present-day Paris. Nietzsche discusses this in *Ecce Homo*, and instances a fairly large number of writers to prove it—Bourget, Loti, Gyp, Meilhac, Anatole France, Lemaître, Guy de Maupassant (of whom he is 'especially fond'). All these he prefers to the older generation, spoilt by too much reading of German philosophy (*Warum ich so klug bin* sect. 3; XXI, 198 ff.).

7

Apart from those already discussed—Gobineau and Guyau—only one contemporary French writer may be said to have exerted any

[1] His library contained translations of the *Geschichte der englischen Literatur*, *Entstehung des modernen Frankreichs* and *Philosophie der Kunst*. And he knew Bourget's essay on him.

[2] Cf. *Genealogie* III, sect. 25 (XV, 441), and *Nachlass* (XVI, 353; XVII, 308, 348, 356, 366). The library contained *Pensées et Fragments* and *Mélanges et Lettres*.

influence on Nietzsche's thought—Paul Bourget. Nietzsche probably became acquainted with him during the *Zarathustra*-time (1882–5).[1] It is noteworthy that all his judgments on modern French writers—on Baudelaire, on Renan, on Flaubert, on the Goncourts and to a lesser degree on Stendhal—run exactly on the lines of Bourget's. This would not be remarkable, were it not that Nietzsche, like Bourget, elaborates a theory to account for the qualities he perceives in the nineteenth-century writers, and that his theory coincides with Bourget's at nearly every point. This requires both emphasis and explanation. Until this last period of his life, Nietzsche has been content to stigmatize as 'decadent' any writer or movement which fails to show that forcefulness and strength which is his criterion of worth. 'Decadence' was, until the time of *Zarathustra*, a very general term of condemnation, and meant little more than weakness and mediocrity. But in recent years he has given the concept much more attention, and has attempted to work out a theory to explain it and to relate the 'descending' life which he sees as characteristic of modern times to a theory of life itself and its historical manifestations. So that in the writings of these last years we have a much more carefully-argued and persuasive theory than ever before, which explains why there is decadence and the rôle that it plays in the life-process.

Decadence is now regarded as much more than simply a failure of will or a lack of healthy egoism:

> Es fehlt am Besten, wenn es an der Selbstsucht zu fehlen beginnt. Instinktiv das *Sich*-schädliche wählen, *Gelockt*-werden durch 'unnteressierte' Motive giebt beinahe die Formel ab für décadence. 'Nicht *seinen* Nutzen suchen' — das ist bloss das moralische Feigenblatt für eine ganz andere, nämlich physiologische Thatsächlichkeit: 'Ich weiss meinen Nutzen nicht mehr zu *finden*' — Disgregation der Instinkte! (*Streifzuge*, sect. 35; XVII, 130).
>
> Ich nenne ein Thier, eine Gattung, ein Individuum verdorben wenn es seine Instinkte verliert, wenn es wählt, wenn es *vorzieht*, was ihm nachtheilig ist . . . wo der Wille zur Macht fehlt, giebt es Niedergang (*Antichrist*, sect. 6; XVII, 173).

Uncertainty, lack of knowledge, lack of will, this is one characteristic, which is as much physiological as psychological. Oversensitivity (cf. *Streifzüge*, sect. 37; XVII, 135; *Antichrist*, sect. 51; XVII, 236) is another. And it has this result:

> Wer allein hat Gründe, sich *wegzulügen* aus der Wirklichkeit? Wer an ihr *leidet*. Aber an der Wirklichkeit leiden heisst eine verunglückte Wirklichkeit sein — Das Übergewicht der Unlustgefühle über die Lustgefühle ist die *Ursache* jener fiktiven

[1] The first reference is from this time (*Nachlass* XIV, 285). The library contained *Études et Portraits*, *Nouveaux Essais de psychologie contemporaine* and *Andrée Cornélie*.

Moral and Religion: ein solches Übergewicht giebt aber die *Formel* ab für décadence (*Antichrist*, sect. 15; XVII, 185).

And these two qualities combine to form a definite cultivation of suffering:

Es giebt heute fast überall in Europa eine krankhafte Empfindlichkeit und Reizbarkeit für Schmerz, insgleichen eine widrige Unenthaltsamkeit in der Klage, eine Verzärtlichung, welche sich mit Religion und philosophischen Krimskrams zu etwas Höherem aufputzen möchte — es giebt einen förmlichen Cultus des Leidens (*Jenseits*, sect. 293; XV, 256).

All these tendencies lead to a total lack of drive:

Eine Art *Anpassung* an diese Überhäufung mit Eindrücken tritt ein: der Mensch verlernt to *agieren*; *er reagiert nur noch* auf Erregungen von aussen her . . . (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 71; XVIII, 59; cf. *Genealogie* I, sect. 12; XV, 304).

It is plain that decadence is something much more complicated than a simple weakening of will, though this is its ultimate cause. It is an over-civilization, an over-refinement, and a hypertrophy of that delicate sense of values and subtlety which civilization brings. In all this Nietzsche is following Bourget, and many of the latter's formulations are identical in essence with Nietzsche's. Of present-day Paris, Bourget writes: 'On est obligé d'affirmer trop pour affirmer quelque chose' (On Renan, *Essais*, p. 74). But, like Nietzsche, he sees the advantage of this over-sensitivity:

Si les citoyens d'une décadence sont inférieurs comme ouvriers de la grandeur du pays, ne sont-ils pas trés supérieurs comme artistes de l'intérieur de leur âme? (on Baudelaire, *Essais*, p. 27).

In the writers of to-day he detects:

. . . une mortelle fatigue de vivre, une morne perception de la vanité de tout effort (*Nouveaux Essais*, p. iv).

Nous sommes malades d'un excès de pensée critique, malades de trop de littérature, malades de trop de science! (on Dumas, ibid., p. 62).

And this is the only cure:

La santé ne réside-t-elle pas dans le pouvoir d'équilibre qui nous permet d'arrêter nos impressions avant qu'elles ne s'amplifient, qu'elles ne s'exaggèrent, jusqu'à dépasser notre force? (ibid., p. 156).

All this is based on his fundamental analysis of decadence:

Par le mot de décadence, on désigne volontiers l'état d'une société qui produit un trop grand nombre d'individus impropres aux travaux de la vie commune. Une société doit être assimilée à un organisme. Comme un organisme, en effet, elle se résout en une fédération d'organismes moindres, qui se résolvent eux-mêmes en une fédération de cellules. Pour que l'organisme total fonctionne avec énergie, il est nécessaire que les organismes composant fonctionnent avec énergie, mais avec une énergie subordonnée. Si l'énergie des cellules devient indépendente, les

organismes qui composent l'organisme total cessent pareillement de subordonner leur énergie à l'énergie totale, et l'anarchie qui s'établit constitue la décadence de l'ensemble. L'organisme social n'échappe pas à cette loi, et il entre en décadence aussitôt que la vie individuelle s'est exaggéré sous l'influence du bien-être acquis et de l'hérédité . . . (*Essais*, p. 24 f.).

And Bourget goes on to show how to-day the part is so much worked on that it obscures the whole; in literature the sentence is polished so much that it becomes an end in itself and the page loses its character, and the chapter and the whole book even more so. Nietzsche even echoes his very words on this point in a passage from the *Fall Wagner*:

Womit kennzeichnet sich jede *literarische* décadence? Damit dass das Leben nicht mehr im Ganzen wohnt. Das Wort wird souverain, und springt aus dem Satz hinaus, der Satz greift über und verdunkelt den Sinn der Seite, die Seite gewinnt Leben auf Unkosten des Ganzen — das Ganze ist kein Ganzes mehr. Aber das ist das Gleichniss für jeden Stil der décadence: jedes Mal Anarchie der Atome, Disgregation des Willens, 'Freiheit des Individuums', moralisch geredet. . . . Das Ganze lebt überhaupt nicht mehr: es ist zusammengesetzt, gerechnet, künstlich, ein Artefakt (sect. 7; XVII, 22).

But these are only symptoms. Bourget formulates a deeper law connecting decadence with civilization. Consciousness, when developed to an extreme degree, kills the will and the power of action. Thought, too much thought, is fatal to the strength of the personality:

C'est probablement une loi que les sociétés barbares tendent de toutes leurs forces à un état de conscience qu'elles décorent du titre de civilisation, et qu'à peine cette conscience atteinte la puissance de vie tarisse en elles (*Essais*, p. 308).

Finally he makes a plea for some measure of unconsciousness:

La réflexion en un mot, n'est-elle pas l'antagoniste invincible de la création? (*Nouveaux Essais*, p. 117; cf. ibid., p. 289).

This theory Nietzsche takes over:

. . . der tiefe Instinkt dafür, dass erst der *Automatismus* die Vollkommenheit möglich macht in Leben und Schaffen. Aber jetzt haben wir den entgegengesetzten Punkt erreicht, ja, wir haben ihn erreichen *gewollt* — die extremste Bewusstheit, die Selbstdurchschauung des Menschen und der Geschichte; — damit sind wir praktisch am fernsten von der Vollkommenheit in Sein, Thun und Wollen: unsere Begierde, unser Wille selbst zur Erkenntniss ist ein Symptom einer ungeheueren décadence. Wir streben nach dem Gegentheil von Dem, was *starke* Rassen, *starke Naturen* wollen — das Begreifen ist ein Ende (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 68; XVIII, 57; cf. sect. 423; XVIII, 296).[1]

[1] This point about the dangers of over-consciousness is, of course, not new in Nietzsche, nor is it original. Schopenhauer had similar things to say, and Bourget in one place does in fact attribute the doctrine of the antagonism between intelligence and action to 'les pessimistes allemands' (*Essais*, p. 75). But Bourget has worked it out in great detail, and, more important, illustrated it by reference to modern French literature, and in both these directions Nietzsche follows him gratefully.

So that finally Nietzsche can put the whole question thus:

> . . . Sie ist kein Ganzes, diese Menschheit: sie ist eine unlösbare Vielheit von aufsteigenden und niedersteigenden Lebensprozessen, — sie hat nicht eine Jugend und darauf eine *Reife* und endlich ein Alter. Sondern die Schichten liegen durcheinander und übereinander — und in einigen Jahrtausenden kann es immer noch jüngere Typen Menschen geben, als wir sie heute nachweisen können. Die décadence andererseits, gehört zu allen Epochen der Menschheit: überall giebt es Auswurf- und Verfalls-Stoffe, es ist ein Lebensprozess selbst, das Ausscheiden der Niedergangs- und Abfalls-Gebilde (ibid., sect. 339; XVIII, 238).
>
> Die décadence selbst ist nichts, was zu *bekämpfen wäre*: sie ist absolut nothwendig und jeder Zeit und jedem Volke eigen (ibid., sect. 41; XVIII, 33).

It can be seen that Nietzsche is heavily indebted to Bourget for this theory of decadence, as well as for his insight into some of the French writers whom he studies as examples of it. In this it cannot be said that Bourget's influence was fundamental, since Nietzsche's thought was moving very much in this direction previously, but he has provided his reader with ready-made conceptions and illustrations of them which have quickly been turned to account.[1] The old Rousseauistic distrust of civilization and exaltation of instinct is not radically changed but it is given a much more intellectualist turn and a much more rationally-grounded formulation.

8

We have discussed Nietzsche's general theory of decadence. It remains to consider what was to him the most important example of it—the Christian attitude to life, and its effect throughout the centuries. The *Antichrist* gives a complete account of the 'slave-revolt' which brought Christianity to birth, and Nietzsche's hatred of the Christian outlook is always based on this belief of his that it was born of resentment and encourages all the qualities opposite to those he regards as 'vornehm'.

Here it is significant that once again the chief examples of his study are French. Indeed, one Frenchman comes for him to stand for the whole of Christianity—Pascal. And he is never able to consider the one without the other. The sketches from the time of *Jenseits* show how important he still considers Pascal to be. He calls him 'deeper than Spinoza' (*Nachlass* XVI, 9). He instances him, with Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Chamfort and Stendhal, to show the 'delicacy'

[1] There are other similarities between Bourget's thought and Nietzsche's. Bourget, too, for instance, believes in the struggle for power (cf. *Nouveaux Essais*, p. 259). And he admires the Renaissance as a time of strength and self-reliance (ibid., p. 131). He opposes democracy on the same grounds as Nietzsche.

of the French spirit (*Nachlass* XVI, 151). He comes near to admitting that Christianity may be the right belief for a certain type of man:

Man muss zu einer solchen Denkweise (wie die christliche ist) den idealen, ganz zu ihr geschaffenen Menschen denken — Pascal z.B. (*Nachlass* XVI, 327).

And he comes to two new conclusions. The first indicates his appreciation that Christianity is, perhaps, of value at certain stages of historical development, though now it represents only a weakening and crippling influence (*Nachlass* XVI, 336). And the second is the view that Christianity destroyed Pascal, which is much more forcibly expressed later (*Nachlass* XVI, 7). He believes that Pascal would have 'recovered' from his Christianity in time. Socrates was deep, he says, and:

. . . in nicht geringem Grade Pascal, der nur dreissig Jahre zu früh starb, um aus seiner prachtvollen bitterbösen Seele heraus über das Christenthum selber hohnzulachen, wie er es früher und jünger über die Jesuiten gethan hat (*Nachlass* XVI, 347).

In *Götzendämmerung* and later works he formulates his view of Christianity and his reasons for rejecting it. Pascal is called a hypochondriac, deluded by his will to believe:

Das jammervollste Beispiel: die Verderbniss Pascals, der an die Verderbniss seiner Vernunft durch die Erbsünde glaubte, während sie nur durch sein Christenthum verdorben war! (*Antichrist*, sect. 5; XVII, 173).

Christianity is interpreted as the opposite of Nietzsche's own view of the sanctity of the personality:

Der Christ will von sich *loskommen*. Le moi est toujours haissable (*Fall Wagner, Epilog*; XVII, 48).

Religion is a kind of disease:

Die Religion ist ein Fall der 'altération de la personnalité'. Eine Art *Furcht-* und *Schrecken-gefühl* vor sich selbst — Aber ebenso ein ausserordentliches *Glücks-* und *Höhengefühl* — Unter Kranken genügt das *Gesundheitsgefühl*, um an Gott, an die Nähe Gottes, zu glauben (*Wille zur Macht*, sects. 135 f.; XVIII, 105 f.).

Nietzsche goes through Pascal's argument. He repudiates the 'raison des effets' in these terms:

'Der Beweis der Kraft': d.h. ein Gedanke wird durch seine *Wirkung* bewiesen — ('an seinen Früchten', wie die Bibel naiv sagt); was begeistert, muss *wahr* sein — wofür man sein Blut lässt, muss *wahr* sein (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 171; XVIII, 127).

And he undertakes a long and careful criticism of the 'pari' as repeated in modern times:

Gesetzt selbst, dass ein Gegenbeweis des christlichen Glaubens nicht geführt

werden konnte, hielt Pascal doch in Hinsicht auf eine *furchtbare* Möglichkeit, dass er dennoch wahr sei, es für klug im höchsten Sinne, Christ zu sein. Heute findet man, zum Zeichen, wie sehr das Christenthum an Furchtbarkeit eingebüsst hat, jenen anderen Versuch einer Rechtfertigung, dass selbst wenn er ein Irrthum wäre, man zeitlebens doch den grossen Vortheil und Genuss dieses Irrthums habe: — es scheint also, dass gerade um seiner beruhigenden Wirkungen willen dieser Glaube aufrecht erhalten werden solle, — also nicht aus Furcht vor einer drohenden Möglichkeit, vielmehr aus Furcht vor einem Leben, dem ein Reiz abgeht. Diese hedonistische Wendung, der Beweis aus der *Lust*, ist ein Symptom des Niedergangs: er ersetzt den Beweis aus der *Kraft*, aus Dem, was an der christlichen Idee Erschütterung ist, aus der *Furcht*. Thatsächlich nähert sich in dieser Umdeutung das Christenthum der Erschöpfung: man begnügt sich mit einem *opiatischen* Christenthum, weil man weder zum Suchen, Kämpfen, Wagen, Allein-stehen-wollen die Kraft hat, noch zum Pascalismus, zu dieser grüblerischen Selbstverachtung, zum Glauben an die menschliche Unwürdigkeit, zur Angst des 'Vielleicht-Verurtheilten' ... (*Wille zur Macht*, sect. 240; XVIII, 175 f.).

Christianity is repeatedly described as decadent and diseased:

... die Krankheit selbst bedingt gedacht durch die Moral, etwa als Strafe oder als Prüfung oder als Heils-Zustand, in dem der Mensch vollkommener wird, als er es in der Gesundheit sein könnte (der Gedanke Pascals), unter Umständen das freiwillige Sich-krank-machen (ibid., sect. 227; XVIII, 166).

Wenn der Entartende und Kranke ('der Christ') so viel Werth haben soll wie der Gesunde ('der Heide'), oder gar noch mehr, nach Pascals Urtheil über Krankheit und Gesundheit, so ist der natürliche Gang der Entwicklung gekreuzt und die *Unnatur* zum Gesetz gemacht (ibid., sect. 246; XVIII, 180).

And here is Nietzsche's radical rejection of the 'decadent' attitude:

Wir sind keine Pascals, wir sind nicht sonderlich am 'Heil der Seele', an eignem Glück, an der eignen Tugend interessiert. — Wir haben weder Zeit noch Neugierde genug, uns dergestalt um uns selber zu drehen. Es steht, tiefer angesehen, sogar *noch* anders: wir misstrauen allen Nabelschauern aus dem Grunde, weil uns die Selbstbeobachtung als eine *Entartungsform* des psychologischen Genies gilt, als ein Fragezeichen am Instinkt des Psychologen: so gewiss ein Maler-auge entartet ist, hinter dem der *Wille* steht, zu sehen, um zu sehen (ibid., sect. 426; XVIII, 299 f.).

His final indictment runs thus:

Man soll es dem Christenthum nie vergeben, dass es solche Menschen wie Pascal zu Grunde gerichtet hat. Man soll nie aufhören, eben Dies am Christenthum zu bekämpfen, dass es den Willen dazu hat, gerade die stärksten und vornehmsten Seelen zu zerbrechen.... Was wir am Christenthum bekämpfen? Dass es die Starken zerbrechen will, dass es ihren Muth entmüthigen, ihre schlechten Stunden und Müdigkeiten ausnützen, ihre stolze Sicherheit in Unruhe und Gewissensnoth verkehren will, dass es die vornehmen Instinkte giftig und krank zu machen versteht, bis sich ihre Kraft, ihr Wille zur Macht rückwärts kehrt, gegen sich selber kehrt, — bis die Starken an den Ausschweifungen der Selbstverachtung und Selbstmisshandlung zu Grunde gehen: jene schauerliche Art des Zugrundegehens, deren berühmtestes Beispiel Pascal abgiebt (ibid., sect. 252; XVIII, 184 f.).

This is the kernel of Nietzsche's feeling for Pascal, in whom he sees just those qualities of heroic 'Vornehmheit' which he most admires, just the clarity, penetration and honesty which he values above all, and to whom he owes so much in the profundity of his psychological, social and philosophical analysis of man and his place in nature. That such a man should have surrendered to an illusion, a pure construction of the mind—this seems to Nietzsche to be equivalent to self-destruction, and this is the root of his charge against Christianity, that it has so perverted the human spirit, even the strongest, even Pascal's. This is, of course, not to say that Nietzsche himself does not recognize that the mind must transcend itself, must in fact worship. He felt this no less than Pascal, and it is strongly expressed. But the historical effects of Christianity, in Nietzsche's view, have been to weaken the spirit, to breed a race of morbid stunted men, such as he saw around him. And arguing from the effect to the teaching, he concludes that if men are to be made strong again, self-reliant and sufficient, a radically different scheme of values must be created. His own *Weltanschauung* is radically different. But that it is based on the need which is at the root of all religion—the need to transcend the personality, to experience the super-human—is beyond doubt:

... Was bedeutet die *Moral-Idiosynkrasie*? Ich frage psychologisch, auch physiologisch, z.B. Pascal ... ist es nicht eine bestimmte Art von *Sensibilität*, welche die Ursache ihrer vielen Unlustgefühle *nicht versteht*, aber mit *moralischen Hypothesen sich zu erklären glaubt*? Moral als die einzige *Interpretationsschema*, bei dem der Mensch sich aushält — eine Art Stolz? (ibid., sect. 270; XVIII, 197 f.).

To the end Nietzsche speaks of Pascal in terms of the greatest devotion. He regards him as an ally,[1] and is filled with despair at the thought that Christianity had destroyed him. Christianity is the most powerful and deadly form of decadence. He puts at the end of *Ecce Homo* a tirade on these lines, which concludes:

Der Begriff 'Sünde' erfunden sammt dem zugehörigen Folterinstrumente, dem Begriff 'freier Wille', um die Instinkte zu verwirren, um das Misstrauen gegen die

[1] Pascal has been a brother-in-arms from the time of *Morgenrothe*. In the *Nachlass* (1881–3) we read:

Eine Seele ist nicht *stark* genug, so viele Kleinheiten der Erkenntniss, so viel Geringes und Niedriges mit in die Höhe hinaufzutragen. So müsst ihr euch über die Dinge belügen, damit ihr eures Kraft- und Grössengefuhls nicht verlustig geht! Anders Pascal und Ich. — Ich brauche mich der kleinen erbärmlichen Details nicht zu entäussern — ich will ja keinen Gott aus mir machen (XXI, 85).

Wenn ich von Plato, Pascal, Spinoza und Goethe rede, so weiss ich, dass ihr Blut in dem meinen rollt — ich bin stolz, wenn ich von ihnen die Wahrheit sage — die Familie ist gut genug, dass sie nicht nöthig hat, zu dichten oder zu verhehlen (XXI, 98).

Cf. pp. 79 ff. above.

Instinkte zur zweiten Natur zu machen! Im Begriff des 'Selbstlosen', des 'Sich-selbst-verleugnenden', das eigentliche décadence-Abzeichen, das *Gelockt*-werden vom Schädlichen, das Seinen-Nutzen-nicht-mehr-finden-*können*, die Selbst-Zerstörung, zum Werthzeichen überhaupt gemacht, zur 'Pflicht', zur 'Heiligkeit', zum 'Göttlichen' im Menschen.[1] Endlich — es ist das Furchtbarste — im Begriff des *guten* Menschen die Partei alles Schwachen, Kranken, Missrathenen, An-sich-selber-Leidenden genommen, alles dessen, *was zu Grunde gehen soll* — das Gesetz der *Selektion* gekreuzt, ein Ideal aus dem Widerspruch gegen den stolzen und wohlgerathenen, gegen den jasagenden, gegen den zukunftsgewissen, zukunftverbürgenden Menschen gemacht — dieser heisst nunmehr der *Böse* — Und das Alles wurde geglaubt als *Moral*! — Écrasez l'infâme! (*Warum ich ein Schicksal bin*, sect. 8; XXI, 286).

We have seen that Nietzsche read Pascal continually from the time of the *Unzeitgemässen* onwards, that he regards him at first simply as the most profound of the French moralists, that with *Morgenröthe* he began to occupy himself with the challenge which Pascal constituted to his own *Weltanschauung*, and that all his work henceforward is marked by the agonized desire to enlist him on his side. The salient fact is that the attempt is never crowned with success, and that Nietzsche can never dismiss Pascal as refuted, or out of touch with himself. Indeed, it seems as though the very reverse is the case, as though the more thoroughly he tried to demolish Pascal's philosophy the stronger grew the conviction that the task was beyond him. The frenzied insistence, in the last works, that Christianity destroyed Pascal, betrays the fact that Nietzsche was aware in himself that his battle was not won, that Pascal's philosophy was untouched by his attacks. This is no mere question of arguments. Pascal repeatedly said, and in this Nietzsche agrees with him, that no amount of argument will convince a man unless his heart can be turned towards the truth, unless he can be brought to will the truth. And Nietzsche is right in seeing in the Christian tradition a power which should be appreciated biologically as much as logically. However much he stigmatizes it as a denial of life, a cowardly refusal to live in the world and a retreat into a safe haven of myth, he knew in his heart that its strength was a factor in our culture which he could not deny:

Ich selber, ein Gegner des Christenthums de rigueur, bin ferne davon, es dem Einzelnen nachzutragen, was das Verhängniss von Jahrtausenden ist (*Ecce Homo*, *Warum ich so klug bin*, sect. 7; XXI, 187).

In setting up his own *Weltanschauung* against Christianity, then, he is consciously putting forward the claim that, biologically speaking,

[1] Compare these expressions with those in the description of decadence quoted, p. 153 above.

his own is a *stronger* power than Christianity, that it will form stronger men, who will cultivate the hero in themselves rather than the saint, so that the saint-morality will eventually die out and the world be peopled with heroes. It is extremely significant that he never seriously discusses the arguments Pascal brings to show the truth of the Christian doctrine. Like Voltaire, he believes that the 'pari' is Pascal's main argument, and the last third of the *Pensées*, which deals with the 'preuves', is not considered. Nietzsche is not interested in such things. He is like Pascal's interlocutor, who follows him up to the 'pari', but in this case is not brought by that argument to desire to pursue the search on Pascal's lines. And, as Pascal says, such a person may read and re-read the 'preuves' without their having any effect on him, since without faith there can be no 'proof'. Once faith is attained, the 'preuves' will show you that your faith is true, which you could not have known otherwise. But Nietzsche has parted company intellectually with Pascal at the 'pari'—he is not fundamentally concerned whether one or other 'system' is objectively true (in so far as truth is regarded as static, or revealed, he denies its existence), but only with the relative effects of the 'systems' on the personality of the believer and the history of our kind. This explains why a man of Nietzsche's intellectual honesty can go so far with Pascal and yet deny him to the end. The modern world is a pale travesty of what the world of men could be and was, and modern man a poor second-rate hack, ashamed of his own existence. If this is due, as Nietzsche holds, to the influence of Christianity, then, leaving the question of truth aside, Christianity should be fought and conquered. This is one side of the picture. The other is the fact that here he who destroys must build anew, that Christianity corresponds to the most fundamental bent of our nature, and the gap left by its destruction must be filled, and filled with a body of belief as profound and as religious as Nietzsche can make it. This explains the myth-creating element in Nietzsche, who was quite unable to rest satisfied in a positivist *Weltanschauung*, and was forced by the movement of his mind to construct a series of myths to answer his eternal questioning. The superman is such a myth, Recurrence another, and in the last years the figure of Dionysos emerges as the third, crowning and irradiating all. This in the end culminated in the mad Nietzsche's self-identification with the Greek god. The last sections of the *Wille zur Macht* concentrate on Dionysos, as in this passage:

Dionysos gegen den 'Gekreuzigten': da habt ihr den Gegensatz. Es ist *nicht* eine Differenz hinsichtlich des Märtyriums, — nur hat dasselbe einen andern Sinn. Das

Leben selbst, seine ewige Fruchtbarkeit und Wiederkehr bedingt die Qual, die Zerstörung, den Willen zur Vernichtung. Im anderen Falle gilt das Leiden, der 'Gekreuzigte als der Unschuldige', als Einwand gegen dieses Leben, als Formel seiner Verurtheilung. — Man erräth: das Problem ist das vom Sinn des Leidens: ob ein christlicher Sinn, ob ein tragischer Sinn. Im ersten Falle soll es der Weg sein zu einem heiligen Sein: im letzten Falle *gilt das Sein als heilig genug*, um ein Ungeheueres von Leid noch zu rechtfertigen. Der tragische Mensch bejaht noch das herbste Leiden: er ist stark, voll, vergöttlichend genug dazu; der christliche verneint noch das glücklichste Los auf Erden: er ist schwach, arm, enterbt genug, um in jeder Form noch am Leben zu leiden. Der Gott am Kreuz ist ein Fluch auf das Leben, ein Fingerzeig, sich von ihm zu erlösen; — der in Stücke geschnittene Dionysos ist eine *Verheissung* des Lebens: es wird ewig wiedergeboren und aus der Zerstörung heimkommen (sect. 1,052; XIX, 364).

But things are not as easy as this. The desperate insistence in these works that Christ and Dionysos are opposites, that man must choose between them, that he himself has chosen long since and cast out Christ from his heart—this is only evidence of the radical desperation of his thought. He has sought continually to eschew invoking any transcendental values or conceptions in his thinking, and has at last been brought to a position where the natively religious bent of his own mind and feeling finds it impossible to remain within the bounds of a *Weltanschauung* which erects life as its own ultimate goal and value.

So Dionysos is once more enthroned in his glory, as he was at the beginning, in the *Geburt der Tragödie*. But now Nietzsche has to carry all the accumulated weight of his own scepticism and nihilism. The early intuitive certainty is impossible and the barren positivism with which he had cast it out is equally untenable. So the attempt has to be made to integrate the two, to make the certainty and unity of the Dionysian view dependent only on an act of will, since nothing else will sustain it. This is having the cake and eating it too. Man alone must set his values, his 'truth'—this is the position of *Zarathustra* and from this there is no going back. Yet in performing this task, man conjures up the god Dionysos, at once the glorification of life and the admission of its relation to a world of eternity. The Eternal Recurrence is another side of this desperate effort to preserve the sovereignty of the individual personality and yet take account of those realities which it cannot finally comprehend. Logically there can be no solution on these lines. Either a 'humanistic' or a religious attitude is possible. Nietzsche's attempt is to construct a combination of both. That he should make the attempt was inevitable, and that he blinks none of the issues involved testifies to the integrity and

breadth and intensity of his thinking. But that the attempt should end in madness seems also inevitable. His madness is not simply the punishment for arrogating to himself the vision and power of God, but rather the logical consequence of trying to see reality with the eye of God and of man at once, to be at once human and divine, creature and creator.

CONCLUSION

ALL writers on Nietzsche call attention to the fundamental importance in the development of his thought of his study of the ancient Greeks and his reading of Schopenhauer. The latter's philosophy gave him his starting-point and dictated the broad lines of his method, while his cultivation of the Greeks, particularly the pre-Socratic philosophers, determined always the direction of his aspirations. The *Geburt der Tragödie*, in which his mind is first revealed in its totality, exemplifies admirably the union of these two tendencies, in which the Schopenhauerian pessimism is balanced and fertilized by a positive mysticism derived from the classical world. But fundamentally these two things are opposed—Schopenhauer's whole bent of thought is entirely against the life-loving, life-worshipping cult of the human being which the Greeks exemplified. The attempt to weld them into a coherent whole is in this book only partly successful. Continually in reading it we are aware that there is falsity at the root of Nietzsche's presentation of his vision, that one or other side of this uneasy partnership will have to be subordinated. This is a more radical thing than his championship of Wagner, which also tends to distort the issue here. Even allowing for this, we find Nietzsche's attitude ultimately contradictory and incoherent, and the reason for this is precisely that his two guides, the German and the Greeks, cannot finally be reconciled.

The underlying tension thus created in Nietzsche's thought remains with him throughout, and reappears in different guises in later works. But his spiritual development does show a gradual increase in awareness of it, and if not the overcoming of it, at least its resolution in some degree by the elaboration of a world-view which takes up the early contradictions and holds them in balance and harmony. That Nietzsche's final attitude is no less 'polarized' than that of his youth cannot be doubted, but there is a progress in his life which allowed him in the end to achieve coherence and unity in this very polarity. It is the submission of this work that the deciding factor here was his intense study of French literature. Whether if he had had no acquaintanceship with the French he would still have succeeded in the task of uniting the two sides of his mind, we cannot know; but certainly as we follow his development we can see him at every step turning to his beloved French for

inspiration and solace, and reflecting in the movement of his own mind the nourishment he continually draws from them.

We have seen how he was attracted by those figures—Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Stendhal—who offered something which would help him to solve his own problems, how he welcomed them and joyfully accepted the insight they brought. Nevertheless, the French influence was by its very nature an invasion. Nietzsche was fundamentally a romantic, despite his protestations of sympathy with the Apolline element, for instance, in Greek art. It is this which explains his brilliant exaggerations in his interpretations of the Greeks. And this is the chief reason for his inability to share in the Olympian balance and coherence achieved by Goethe. On the face of it it is surprising that this German romantic, nourished on Schopenhauer, should cultivate the French, and especially should regard the seventeenth century as the high-point of the modern European cultural achievement. Plainly this is no simple case of a man searching for and cultivating his own opposite. His study of the French was undertaken with his eyes open, was, indeed, a deliberate and conscious and long-sustained effort at self-education. And in every case we can trace in Nietzsche the urge within him which drove him to such and such a writer, the lack that needed balancing, the feeling that needed expression.

The main thread connecting Nietzsche with the French was undoubtedly the conception of the mystery and sacredness of the human personality which runs so strongly through his work and theirs. It is true that he appreciated Montaigne as a smiling sceptic, La Rochefoucauld as a penetrating critic of human motive, Chamfort as a bitter analyst of social reality, Stendhal as a defiant philosopher of energy. It is true that he saw in Pascal the most powerful critic of human vanity that he knew. And he read all these men partly, so to speak, to gather ammunition for use against the philistines, but also, and here is the real importance of the matter, because his nature was fundamentally akin to theirs. How else can we explain the fact that he did not simply read them and take over their ideas but kept them by him, referring to them continually, seeing them all the time either as friends and companions in his struggle or as antagonists to be 'overcome' at all costs? We can divide the writers he cultivated into those he admired and joyfully accepted—Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Chamfort, Voltaire, Stendhal, Mérimée, for instance—and those whom he lost no opportunity of vilifying but nevertheless returned to again and again, and felt always as a challenge to himself

—and here Rousseau and Pascal are the two great examples. But whichever attitude he adopted, the great question to which he sought always an answer was the question of human personality. That was the dominant current in his thought, and it is the French who have attempted most successfully and consistently to examine this idea. There is an anti-rationalist, non-Cartesian element running through all the writers whom Nietzsche cultivated deeply which plainly appealed to a similar strain in him. It reached its most unequivocal expression perhaps in Pascal, whom he regarded as a standing proof of the terrible damage that religion can do to the personality, but it is to be seen in them all. The influence of these men on Nietzsche was effective not only in that they provided him with a more penetrating analysis than he could find elsewhere of the self-deception and humbug which attends all human actions and opinions, not only that they showed him what a poor and deluded being man is, but also that they brought home to him the basically contradictory nature of the human situation of man, neither angel nor beast—a reed, but one which thinks. He learnt from them the depth of man's misery, but also the height of his grandeur. This antinomy had been apparent to the Greeks, who had solved it in their tragedy, and had thereafter been hidden under the humanism of the Renaissance, neglected by the *Aufklärung* in Germany, and conquered in Goethe. In France it had never been lost to sight, and Nietzsche therefore finds here the truest expression and the most complete recognition of it.

In bringing Nietzsche again and again face to face with the ultimate problem of man, then, the French writers played a determinative part in his development. In his elaboration of his ideal of human culture, to which all his work may finally be reduced, it is the French who are continually his guides. But this assertion raises a question. It would seem that the influence exerted by the French writers, particularly by such men as Montaigne, should have been in the direction of moderation, of the achievement of a just balance, a 'golden mean' in the Greek tradition. It is the quality of balance which is the most marked characteristic of French literature and its greatest contribution to our culture. One would expect to see the tragic contradictions of Nietzsche's thought led by this influence, working with his study of Greek civilization, in the direction of a final reconciliation and harmony, such as was constructed in the classical period he so much admired. But this is not so. The situation of Nietzsche himself, a product of the nineteenth century, made it perhaps a vain hope in

any case. But we might expect to see a gradual diminution of extravagance, a toning-down of antitheses. And this is plainly not the case. The unity and coherence of his final *Weltanschauung* is not that of balance, but of a polarity ever more heightened until the opposite poles spring together in their tension. And throughout his life Nietzsche moves ever nearer to this, swinging ever more violently from extreme to extreme. It is this quality of 'antithetical' thinking which determines in part our characterization of him as a romantic, and which makes his cultivation of the French at first sight paradoxical.

When we speak of his 'antithetical' thinking we can see at once the common ground between him and Pascal. The Pascalian 'renversement du pour au contre', the dialectical movement of his thought between contradictory propositions, each true on their own level—this quality in Pascal bears a strong resemblance to the fundamentally self-contradictory method of Nietzsche's thinking. Pascal—and Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld, too, in a different sphere—are not for him simply sceptics who attack the supremacy of the reason, they are also admirable exponents of an intellectual method which is similar to Nietzsche's own. And his conception of the rôle of the reason in discovering truth is similar to theirs. It is true, of course, that he takes the development a stage further in the direction of pragmatism. His conception of philosophical truth is not simply 'relativism' or 'perspectivism', as it has been called, but is that truth can only be appreciated as a result of 'existential' thinking—it is not static, but becoming and become, and known only in living. It should be remembered too that Nietzsche held reality to be unknowable, but held also that the mind could tear away veil after veil from it, always finding another veil beneath but always disposing of error by the way. Pascal and Nietzsche, in fact, had similar views on the nature of human knowledge, and, much more important, both found a similar technique in formulating and expressing their truths.

This brings us to the fundamental fact of Nietzsche's attitude to the transcendent. We have noticed repeatedly the religious basis of his outlook, and it is highly significant that he singles out the Christian quality in the French tradition for emphasis. The reading of this literature brought continually before him the essential problems to which Christianity addresses itself, and forced him to deal with them. Jaspers has pointed out that the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, so central to Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung*, is to be grasped in its entirety only when we realize that it represents the only possible alternative

for Nietzsche to a belief in a transcendent God. This is well said. Nietzsche is too often represented as simply a Dionysian humanist, exhorting men to remain true to the earth and not go awhoring after strange and irrational gods. It should be remembered that he was throughout tortured by the knowledge that reality is irrational and unknowable, and sought a solution to this tragic rootlessness in a philosophy which emphasizes the impact and effect of belief, not knowledge, on living.

We have seen how his early mystical aestheticism was coloured by and indeed based on the attitude to which Rousseau first gave definitive expression. This is not so much a matter of direct influence, but rather of mental inheritance. Nietzsche's mind is from the start fundamentally like Rousseau's, and he stands in direct line of descent from him. He rarely speaks of the Frenchman with anything but scorn and hatred, but he repeatedly returns to him, wrestles with him, and can never pass him over. He searches always for scapegoats on which to vent his wrath, and Rousseau is one of the most frequent. At the end, in his search for a focus for all his disgust at the mediocrity and vulgarity of 'civilized' man, he comes to a position in many ways opposite to that of his youth. At the beginning he had attributed all the ills of his time to a concentration on material ends, a short-sighted pursuit of 'progress' and prosperity at the expense of real culture. When he considered the Greeks, it was Socrates, the 'theoretical' man, the *raisonneur*, the prototype of Voltaire, who destroyed the bases of myth, of unreason, of faith, upon which the ancient world was built. And then, at the end, it is Rousseau, the direct opposite of Socrates, who destroyed the careful balance between reason and unreason, between Descartes and Montaigne and Pascal, upon which the finest flower of our civilization was based. It is Rousseau, who, by vanquishing Voltaire, the protagonist of 'culture', of order, form, and free reason, has precipitated the Revolution and all that followed it. But this swing-over in Nietzsche is not so fundamental as it seems. For his ideal is neither reason nor unreason, neither Socrates-Voltaire nor Aeschylus-Schopenhauer-Rousseau. It is a balance of the two principles, a polarity and tension where each side is given its due. And just as in his relation with Christianity (the other great scapegoat in his thought), he bitterly attacks Pascal and yet in doing so is attacking part of himself, so in his attack on Rousseau he is not simply fighting Voltaire's battle over again, but is setting one side of himself against the other. 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off'. We do not understand Nietzsche until we realize that all his thinking

is in the last resort a continual hacking at his own offending right hand. In its deepest implications his attack on Rousseau is an attack on his own *alter ego*, and his own attitude is fundamentally akin to the Frenchman's throughout. There is much in Rousseau that he saw, too, in the French seventeenth-century moralists, and in German thinkers from Kant to Schopenhauer. From one point of view Rousseau is the culmination of a tendency which Nietzsche followed through the whole of French literature—the distrust of reason, of schemes and categories, of step by step logical analysis, which answers so perfectly to the cast of his own mind. As the noble aristocratic anti-rationalistic writers of the French sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in their expression of the free untrammelled personality, so dextrously maintained that precarious balance and harmony of opposing tendencies in the last great flowering of our culture, so Rousseau, too, represents the same ideal in the next century, the century of Voltaire and the 'philosophes', of the spirit which was to reach such telling expression in the positivism of Comte. Rousseau, as the last great giant of the tradition of personality, of that fine noble egoism which was Nietzsche's delight—this Rousseau never called to him in vain. He is, of course, not the last of the line. Stendhal, despite his affinity with the tradition of the 'philosophes' and their successors, the 'idéalogues', carried on the same tendency, as did his 'pupil' Mérimée. And these men, too, Nietzsche cultivated. In keeping alive that strain of reverence for personal values in a century in which the enveloping barbarism and vulgarity was only too apparent, and was to triumph later, Rousseau could not but evoke Nietzsche's admiration. But the price he paid, Nietzsche thought too high. In his view, the other side of Rousseau's cultivation of 'personality'—the insistence on equality and liberty—led in the very direction whither the 'philosophes' were pointing. Historically Rousseau was on the wrong side; it was the 'philosophes' who exemplified the fine old aristocratic spirit and Rousseau who led the mob clamouring to be let in to enjoy the good things. And so Nietzsche sees him as responsible for all the ills of to-day, and this he cannot forgive. Nevertheless Rousseau and Nietzsche both attack essentially the same problem. Both see 'modern man' as essentially corrupted, fallen from a finer state, and both ascribe this corruption to the complex of activities included in the word 'civilization'. Both in fact analyse the history of the last centuries as one of decadence, and both try to discover the cause of this and prescribe a cure. The two analyses are different, but they have fundamental points in common. And the two cures—the

'return to nature' and the 'Werde, der du bist'—are by no means as far apart as might be supposed. We may even venture the assertion that Rousseau's 'homme naturel' and Nietzsche's Superman are in essence terms for the same thing. Nietzsche in this respect may be regarded as a direct equivalent of Rousseau in the more intense and tragic context of the late nineteenth century. Nietzsche, too, is calling on us to 'follow nature', to be honest, to be ourselves, to give heed to those voices in us which speak through the body, the instincts, the pre-logical consciousness. And the 'will' which is the pride and joy of full humanity is unique and personal to each of us, prior to and deeper than our logical and moral consciousness. In all this Nietzsche is in the same tradition as Rousseau, and despite his protestations to the contrary, we cannot but see the latter's influence at work in him.

In spite of all his championship of Voltaire, Nietzsche was not fundamentally affected by him as he was by Rousseau. In the central 'positivistic' period of his work (1876–82), Voltaire appealed to him as a 'free spirit', an emancipated independent thinker who refused to be bound by prejudice or convention. With the maturing of Nietzsche's thought this quality in Voltaire had less appeal, and it was rather as an example of 'Vornehmheit' that he regarded him. Voltaire acted in some sort as a bridge between Nietzsche's early cultivation of the genius and the general theory of 'Vornehmheit' into which it developed. For although the French seventeenth-century writers had good claims to the title of 'vornehm' they did not stand out, since the culture of the whole period was of a like nature. Voltaire represented 'Vornehmheit' in a time of gradual dissolution of that culture, a time marked by the emergence of powers directly opposed to it. So Voltaire could be seen as an exponent of what was great in earlier times in action on the threshold of to-day. His problem was thus much more akin to Nietzsche's own. To this extent he was a model upon which Nietzsche could build his theory and also in some degree a proof of its possibility. His lifelong struggle against untruth and the blinding of reason by prejudice, convention, passion, laziness and dishonesty, was a constant exhortation to Nietzsche to follow the same path, to be as liberal, as tolerant, as merciless as his master. And there is, coupled with Nietzsche's devotion to the 'Wahrhaftigkeit' which he found in Voltaire, as in the Greeks, also a certain echo of Voltaire's irony in the way in which he delights in tumbling down accepted ideas and setting up paradoxes to shock the reader out of his complacency. Both men hated complacency and both fought it all the time. But

there is a significant divergence here, the result both of the century which has passed between them, and also of the fundamental dissimilarity of their minds. Voltaire fights always for the supremacy of the reason—his attitude is the opposite of the 'credo quia absurdum' of the Schools. His deism is 'natural' religion in this sense. Whereas Nietzsche puts not only prejudice and dishonesty in the dock, but also reason itself. His only criterion of value is fundamentally 'life'. In this he inclines to the temper of Rousseau and against Voltaire, and also picks up the tradition of the seventeenth century. Voltaire was a continual example to Nietzsche, but it is impossible to recognize any profound influence in this matter. But there is another quality in Voltaire which Nietzsche emphasizes more and more during his life—the quality of style, of order, culture, form. No doubt Nietzsche exaggerates this aspect of Voltaire's achievement, but it is true that the Frenchman appealed to him finally much more as an upholder of this ideal at a time of barbarism than as a 'bel esprit' or a thinker of complete integrity. Voltaire was one of the few men who achieved that 'unity of style' which is true culture. But here again his influence is not the turning of Nietzsche's mind in any definite direction, but simply the living proof of the possibility of his deepest aspirations. Voltaire proved to him that culture was possible in the modern world, that the Greek spirit was not irrevocably dead. Thus he encouraged him, preserved his faith in himself, and in his mission. This is an influence—if influence it can be called—quite different in kind from the others that played on him.

Rousseau and Voltaire were probably the first French writers that Nietzsche read with deep attention. But Montaigne, Pascal and La Rochefoucauld are the three whom he most assiduously cultivated. Montaigne's action on him was continuous and profound. On the nature of truth, on the relativity of morals, on the function of the intellect, on custom, on the human personality, on education, on the inexplicability of human motive—on all these things Nietzsche's thought is plainly indebted to Montaigne. This action on Nietzsche may be said to start with the emancipation of his thought from the early mystical subservience to Wagner and Schopenhauer. Andler describes the quality in Montaigne which attracted him as 'l'intelligence souriante', and it is true that nothing could have been better calculated to free him from the unsmiling cult of the Master than the gentle unworried scepticism of the *Essais*. The young professor at Basle, disillusioned with his own country and culture, could be said perhaps to be guilty of taking himself and life a little too seriously.

He could hardly live but only theorize about life, and had to relate everything to a dark unutterable tension of forces which were as much a product of his own imagination as of reality. This is what makes the *Geburt der Tragödie* fundamentally an unreal book, a product of the study rather than of life. Its obsession with forces which are unconscious and dangerous, which we can only dimly apprehend, but which rule us in our deepest being—this is a valuable antidote to the superficial conceptions of much nineteenth-century thinking, but the truth is so mingled here with a cloudy and somewhat precious mysticism that the emphases seem to be misplaced and the whole gives an impression of almost morbid irrationality. There is no greater contrast to this book than such later ones as *Morgenröthe* (1881), where the objectives are limited, there is equal penetration but no straining after the unknowable, and a calm, cool breeze of clarity and detachment blows throughout.

The movement of Nietzsche's mind, which is far more than simply the emancipation from his early masters, Wagner and Schopenhauer, is largely the result of the paramount influence of the French moralists, and especially Montaigne, whose unruffled Epicureanism is the best antidote to the woolliness of Wagner's romanticism. And the corollary to the overcoming of the early subservience to his masters is the turn from a predominantly metaphysical attitude to life to one in which the emphasis is ethical. This does not mean that Nietzsche is not concerned after the first period with questions of ultimate reality, of God and the universe, of the final end of man. But he more and more renounces the way of abstract speculation as a method of solving them. He adopts Montaigne's premiss that the way to know truth is to know oneself, and it is by the analysis of the phenomena of consciousness that he tries to discover the nature of the universe. Truth is only important in so far as it affects living, belief is important as a spur to action. Man is the measure of all things. Nietzsche does not accept introspection as a valid intellectual method, but his interest is in the psychological and biological aspects of thought throughout, and it is this method which he applies to all the questions of philosophy, even purely epistemological ones. And in this swing of his mind *inwards*, it is the French, and chiefly Montaigne, who in large part determine his direction.

Montaigne is in the tradition of the Renaissance, he is a humanist in the deepest sense, and he draws his spiritual nourishment from the ancients. Yet his Epicureanism is tempered and strengthened by an insistence on personal effort towards right living and self-education.

His accent throughout is on the doing of right rather than on the knowing of truth. Nietzsche, following him, develops from a person whose strongest native impulse is his 'Erkenntnisdrang', his desire to know the ultimate mysteries, to one who tends more and more to be concerned with right action, whose preoccupations are finally ethical and not metaphysical.[1] This was not in any sense a complete change-over. His final position is a happy blend of the metaphysical and the ethical, and the addition of the latter makes his natively metaphysical thinking all the richer and gives it a more forceful, personal and vital note which it might otherwise have lacked. This is the most profound influence that French literature exercised on him. Without it, it is possible that his development might have been smoother and in a sense purer, but it would have been less rich and less personal. Without the French he might have been an immeasurably more profound Winckelmann, crossed with Romantic pessimism; he would not have achieved that wide synthesis of subjectivism and religious objectivity which characterizes his last works.

In the elaboration of his ethical ideal the influence of Montaigne was reinforced by that of La Rochefoucauld. It is the latter in his rôle of psychological iconoclast who provided so much ammunition for Nietzsche in his inquiry into the origins of morality, particularly during the so-called 'positivistic' period (1876–82). And this remains true for the remainder of his life, but from *Zarathustra* (1882–5) onwards he reads La Rochefoucauld with a deeper appreciation of the positive side of his attitude. The conception of 'Vornehmheit' owes a great deal to that fastidious aristocratic love and admiration of truth-to-oneself which La Rochefoucauld regards as the highest, truest, morality. The fundamentally mysterious and irrational nature of the springs of human action, too, is laid bare by the Frenchman and passes into Nietzsche's thinking. Not only society is based on deceit and pretence—this Nietzsche knew well from Montaigne and Pascal—but also our own personal integrity is a shifting balance of forces, unconscious impulses at war with each other, and coming to consciousness dressed up in the deceptive clothes of ideals and virtues and disinterested nobility. Our good is always mixed with bad, our

[1] Matthew Arnold, with his famous distinction between the Hellenist and the Hebraist, the man who seeks to know truth and him who seeks to act rightly, touches upon this point. His distinction is in the end faulty, since right action involves knowledge, ethical and metaphysical questions in the end are connected, but it lays bare a difference of emphasis which goes deep. In these terms Nietzsche's development may be regarded as the increasing impression of a Hebraist stamp on his natively Hellenist mind. And the French, headed by Montaigne, stand squarely in the Hebraist tradition, and largely determine this evolution in him.

wisdom always mixed with 'folie', our egoism always bars the way for our impulse to sincerity and self-knowledge. All these ideas stream into Nietzsche's mind from La Rochefoucauld. And with them the ideal we have noticed, of final absence of pretence, of genuineness, which is in its turn bound up with the Renaissance ideal of the great man, beyond good and evil, a law to himself. Nietzsche's final conception of the 'vornehm' man, who dares to be himself, who does what he wills, and is justified by the fact that he *can* will, who creates moral value from within himself, untrammelled by any moral standards which are external to him, is an extension of La Rochefoucauld's ideal. Just as Nietzsche extends his analysis of moral reality by the addition of the historical examination of the origin of moral ideas, so he extends the conception of 'genuineness' of the personality, adherence to a tradition of 'higher men' somewhat akin to Nietzsche's 'lords', by transforming it finally into the doctrine of the Superman, who adheres to no tradition and is answerable to himself alone. And yet in each of these extensions it can be argued that Nietzsche is only completing his master's thought and restating it in the context of the modern situation.

Nietzsche's love of Pascal, his delight in his writings, and his oft-expressed feeling of indebtedness to him, is perhaps the most paradoxical of the many problems he raises. That Nietzsche, the most penetrating critic of the Christian tradition and its most uncompromising opponent, should have expressed such delight in the writings of its most powerful apologist, and more, should have characterized him so frequently in terms which imply brotherhood-in-arms rather than enmity, calls for some explanation. We have here the same sort of relationship as that between Nietzsche and Rousseau. The various mentions of Pascal in *Ecce Homo* (1888) show the strength of the latter's hold over him and also give some idea of the effort Nietzsche made to repudiate him. And in this book, the last, Nietzsche is near madness and seems at times to be struggling to communicate some truth beyond our experience, some truth which is killing him, but his egoism is so swollen, so near to megalomania that it seems that human pride can find no phrases more nauseating in their self-glorification; he is almost in his mind Dionysos himself; he has denied God and from a native desire to worship is driven to worship himself. But the essential quality of Nietzsche's last work is that the growing incoherence, the visible signs of mental destruction, seem to tear away the veil of appearance and reveal the naked spirit beneath, so that we are face to face with

the real man without the disguises hitherto imposed by convention, medium, form. There is a clarity and an absolute honesty about *Ecce Homo* which makes what he expresses, even if often intellectually unacceptable, all the more precious for the light it sheds on his essential make-up. But if it is thought that this book is so near madness that no attention should be paid to it, we can find sprinkled throughout the works similar protestations of love and veneration for the Pascal who so strongly challenged him.[1] He was drawn to the Frenchman first, perhaps, by admiration for his uncompromising logic. He frequently refers to him as the only logical Christian, and it is plain that the Pascalian dialectical method found a ready response in the critical anti-rationalism of Nietzsche's own mind. The paradox of a strictly logical destruction of the claim of the reason to know truth, which attracted him in Montaigne, is more marked still in Pascal. There is nothing intrinsically new in this, nothing the critical philosophers of ancient times had not foreshadowed, but in Pascal the destruction of the reason is carried out within a wider perspective which is the mark of a mind more subtly attuned to the terrible aspects of reality than the Ancients or Montaigne. And springing from this is the fact that Pascal was one of the greatest mathematicians of his day; his anti-rationalism is thus no mere paradox, but the conclusion of a mind which was able to situate the mind in its place in nature, to recognize the essential quality in it, which he expresses in the phrase 'l'homme passe infiniment l'homme', that our reach is higher than our grasp, that we have an 'idée de la vérité' but also an 'impuissance de prouver'. It is Pascal's recognition of both these facts and his combination of them in his philosophy which struck an answering echo in Nietzsche. Both these aspects of the mind are recognized by Nietzsche and he does also realize that they are connected, though he does not accept the conclusion Pascal draws from them, the doctrine of Original Sin. It is this union of contraries in the movement of Pascal's thought, which was, perhaps, the cause of Nietzsche's first delight in him. To this must be added the fact that Pascal was for him an opponent worthy of his steel, one of the few 'enemies' he could respect. He is an enemy whom it is a joy to fight, with whom the battle extends Nietzsche to the utmost, so that victory and defeat are almost fortuitous side-issues. Pascal is a touchstone on which to prove himself. In his consideration of human culture and history he regards French culture as a touchstone on which to test his theories, he finds examples of 'Vornehmheit' largely

[1] Cf. especially the *Nachlass* from 1881–2 (cf. pp. 83 ff. above).

in the French, he applies his theory of decadence to them in the conviction that if it is proved in this instance it must be a true analysis. It is the same with his attitude to Christianity. If he can prove his theory in the case of Pascal, then it will stand anywhere. Pascal is the 'type' Christian, not merely for purposes of example, but because he is the extreme challenge. If Nietzsche conquers Pascal he has conquered Christianity.

But beyond and behind all this lies the fact that the two men are more alike than they are different. They are alike in that they both think 'existentially', they both realize that thinking is not just an activity of the mind, but of the whole personality, that our actions and our thoughts are the expression of our whole selves, for which we are eternally responsible. They are both concerned with the transcendental implications of thought, to which they give such different expression. They both, one feels, risk their souls when they speak. This is the deepest affinity between them. And they are alike in the quality mentioned earlier, that they both see so clearly the elemental paradox of man, caught between two infinities, angel and beast in one, with an idea of truth, goodness, beauty, and without knowledge, a problem to himself and the expression of a purpose which transcends him, which he can only dimly apprehend and never know.

Pascal's influence on Nietzsche has a double character. On the one hand he reinforces the influence of Montaigne and the other moralists, deepening their psychology and giving Nietzsche a more radical analysis of human motive and human institutions than they. It is predominantly this which impressed Nietzsche until about the time of the *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882). And on the other hand we see emerging more and more clearly from this time onwards that much deeper kinship described above. Here is a combination of influence and of the innate bent of Nietzsche's mind coming to expression. It is Pascal who revealed this side of Nietzsche to himself, it is by the reading of Pascal that he was made aware of himself. Pascal is a mirror, showing him this, perhaps, unexpected side of his own nature —the religious basis of his thought. That this is expressed in terms of repudiation and antagonism need not delude us for a moment— when Nietzsche is most savage in attack we should be prepared to find him most heavily indebted to his opponent. And so here. It is untrue to say that Pascal made him religious, but that Pascal revealed to him his fundamentally religious nature is incontestable. And it may not be exaggerated to number this among the most profound

influences that he underwent. Perhaps Nietzsche owes the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence to Pascal in a deeper sense than to the pre-Socratic philosophers. What would he have been if he had not come into contact with Pascal? He would have been, perhaps, less extreme in his attack on Christianity. For, paradoxically, it is Pascal who forces him into a corner from which he can only escape by a repudiation which might not have been so radical had he not been so hard-pressed. And again he might have been content with a more simply humanistic *Weltanschauung* and not have been driven to an essentially religious viewpoint. 'Renversement du pour au contre'. Perhaps we have to thank Pascal for both—for the *Antichrist* and for *Zarathustra* too, for Nietzsche's 'religion' as well as his denial of Christianity.

The last major figure in the line of Frenchman who so powerfully affected him was Stendhal, whom he discovered somewhat late in life, but cultivated with delight ever after. Here again, we have a twofold influence. On the one hand, Stendhal with his uncompromising honesty and his clear-sighted analysis of human motive, reinforced the lesson of the moralists and added to his predecessors a more savage note, a more shattering revelation of the basis of egoism which governs our action. Here we have the strain of Helvétius taken up and related to a view of life which places force and energy as the ultimate values, which discards the traditional moral categories and indulges in unashamed cultivation of the human organism on its own terms. Stendhal's perception of the individual as a power-centre striving to subjugate its environment, his plea for self-assertion without limit, for the pursuit of happiness beyond good and evil, his concentration on the type of the great criminal, coupled with his profound psychological insight, added the final term to the development Nietzsche followed through French literature. And all this contributed further to the elaboration of Nietzsche's ethical ideal. And on the other hand Stendhal, placed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was one more proof that modern man is not entirely depraved, his will not entirely broken and weakened by his elaborate and highly sensitive consciousness. Nietzsche accepts Bourget's analysis of the nineteenth century as will-less and decadent, and like Bourget sees this as the result of the over-sensitivity, the extreme cultivation of the sensibility which characterizes the modern age. But Bourget excepts Stendhal from this charge. Stendhal, he says, is the only great example of a man who has succeeded in combining the most refined sensibility, the 'esprit d'analyse' with no diminution, rather an increase, in the natural brute force and energy

of the will. This is Nietzsche's view too. Stendhal is a proof that modern effete over-sensitivity need not result in the atrophy of the will, and is therefore a pointer to the Superman. Nietzsche shares Stendhal's admiration for the Renaissance hero-qualities, but it is not simply as an exponent of these ideals that Stendhal influences him, but rather as a bridge between the old past greatness and the greatness to come. Stendhal combines both sides of the desired ideal—the honesty and subtlety of perception and the sovereign pride and forcefulness of the will.

Around these great figures, the lesser ones grouped themselves in Nietzsche's mind, and each contributed his part to his spiritual development. Such writers as La Bruyère, Vauvenargues, Helvétius, Chamfort, Galiani added their quota to his psychological insight, Gobineau helped to form his conception of the Renaissance, and among the moderns Bourget provided him with a complete theory of decadence and an insight into its expression in contemporary French literature. But hardly any Frenchman read by Nietzsche failed to leave some trace behind. Descartes, for instance, who was so antipathetic to him, nevertheless contributed materially to his impression of the qualities of the French seventeenth century. And Fontenelle and Diderot act in the same way for a later period. From the moderns, whether he admired them, as in the case of Mérimée, Maupassant, Doudan, Taine, or heartily despised them, as with Victor Hugo, George Sand, Zola, he always draws some nourishment. One has the impression that his French reading is never haphazard, however catholic and even eclectic his choice of writers may seem to be. And wherever he touches, his mind strikes off sparks which illuminate some corner hitherto dark and light his own footsteps onward.

This reading not only affected his thought but also leaves its mark on his expression. If we compare the style of, say, the *Geburt der Tragödie* (1871) with that of any of the last works, we are struck by the most marked difference in his use of language. Whereas the earlier book is written in German which shows little divergence from tradition, the later ones show that 'dancing' style which Nietzsche made peculiarly his own, in which the structure of the German language is continually strained and dislocated, the writing is often disjointed and even incoherent, but the utmost significance is extracted from each phrase by knocking it, so to speak, off its balance, so that the reader is immediately aware of the tension of the thought. It is significant that this style of Nietzsche's is entirely his own. It

has not been successfully imitated and is often untranslatable. And it is noteworthy that on several occasions Nietzsche said that his work would have been more effective if written in French.[1] There can be no proof that his reading of French literature influenced his prose style, but it is permissible to conjecture that this was so. And in more easily investigated matters there seems good ground for attributing changes in his method of presentation to French influence. The abandonment in *Menschliches* I (1876) of the connected argument, for instance, in favour of the 'aphoristic' style for which he is so well known, may well be due in part to the reading of Pascal and La Rochefoucauld. And he frequently gives little vignettes of character after the manner of La Bruyère. In no book after this, with the possible exception of the *Genealogie*, can Nietzsche be said to write long connected argument—he seizes always on the salient points in short independent paragraphs. Yet it would be wrong to say he writes in aphorisms. The *maxime* as a method of writing is plainly uncongenial to him, and after *Menschliches* he abandons it almost entirely. His favourite form is the short essay of a paragraph or two. Here he probably owes more to Pascal than to anyone else. And he continually couches his thought in the form of short dialogues which are surely modelled on those of Chamfort.

There is one further point about his style. He delights in the books from *Menschliches* onwards in sharpening his thought into a paradox, even to the point of exaggerating it till its truth is compromised. The most striking examples of this are to be found in *Zarathustra*, where frequently things are said in a way which is deliberately shocking and perverse. Nietzsche's object here, and wherever he uses this method, is not so much to state his truths in the most arresting way, but to shake the reader out of his complacency, to shock him out of his mental sloth, to force him to think by courting his violent rejection. The more notorious of Nietzsche's formulations are often to be regarded as attempts to carry out such shock-treatment. Towards the end of his intellectual life his growing megalomania undoubtedly added also to this effect, and the remarks of *Ecce Homo*, for example, are often the result of his unbounded egoism and pride, the euphoria consequent on his mental state. But in the other books we may frequently justify his apparent absurdities and exaggerations if we remember that he has throughout a reader in mind whom he must somehow provoke to thought. His use of language in this way,

[1] Cf. his letters to Deussen, 14 September, 1888, and to Burckhardt, autumn 1888 (*Ges. Br.* I, 535 f.; III, 193).

as a bludgeon, or a pistol pointed at our minds, may well owe something to La Rochefoucauld's similar use of the pointed *maxime* to shock his reader to thought. La Rochefoucauld's exaggerations are often the result of a similar desire, not so much to appear witty or profound, but to force the reader to take notice and think about the issue raised. The truth of the formulation is less important than its effect on the reader. And this is linked in Nietzsche's mind to the denial of 'truth' in any static sense, and his contention that what matters in life is the *effect* of belief rather than its truth or falsehood. In this method of using language Nietzsche owes something to La Rochefoucauld, and perhaps also to Voltaire, who combined this technique with his essential irony.

We may sum up, then, by saying that Nietzsche's reading of French literature had two major effects on him. In the first place it played in some sort the part of the personal experience of life which in his solitary wandering he lacked. His knowledge of human nature was won more from reading French books than from meeting people. But the French writers are, by comparison with the Germans, so supremely concrete and actual, that the reading of them gave him a genuine insight into the way human beings behave and turned him no doubt from a bookish, rather abstract speculator into a keen observer of human nature. The second effect is connected with this —it is the substitution in his thought of a fundamental interest in man, in human nature, for one in metaphysics and the ultimate mysteries of the cosmos. Without this French influence Nietzsche might have followed much more the tradition of German thinkers, and spent his life speculating about the abstract metaphysical issues so beloved of his race. But the French brought him down to earth, forced him to recognize that the ultimate mystery, the ultimate problem is the individual man, taught him psychology, showed him the implications of morality, and gave him the incentive to build his *Weltanschauung* on a consideration of individual human life. In this they plainly did him nothing but good. His final attitude is a happy blend of the two sides of his tension—the native profundity and tenacious abstract thinking of the German is joined to and controlled by the concrete immediate insight of the French, and the wide visions and syntheses are based always on an awareness which is continually the reflection of empirical fact.

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TRANSLATION OF PASSAGES QUOTED IN GERMAN

p. ix. It cannot but be a misconception to speak of the victory of German civilization and culture, a misconception resulting from the fact that in Germany the genuine idea of culture has been lost.

p. x. Journey to Hades: I too have been in the underworld, like Odysseus, and will be there often again, and I have not sacrificed only wethers, to speak to some of the dead, but have not spared my own blood. Four pairs there were who answered my sacrifices: Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. With these I must come to grips, even if I have wandered alone so long, from them I will learn what is right and wrong; I will listen to them as they explain to each other their right and wrong. Whatever I say, decide, conceive, for myself and others: on those eight my gaze is fixed, and I see theirs fixed on me.—May the living forgive me, if *they* seem sometimes to me like shades, so pale and moody, so restless and oh! so hankering for life: while those eight seem so living to me, as though now, *after* death, they could never again be tired of life. But it is eternal livingness which matters: what is the point of 'eternal life', or indeed of life at all?

Reading Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Fontenelle (the *Dialogues des morts*), Vauvenargues, Chamfort, one is nearer the ancients than with any group of six authors of other countries. Through these six the spirit of the last centuries before Christ is revived—together they form an important link in the great still incomplete chain of the Renaissance . . . they contain more *real thoughts* than all the books of German philosophers together.

To *glow* with a thought, to be burnt up with it—that is French. The German admires himself and looks at himself and his passion in a mirror and calls others to admire.

p. xi. *Esprit* un-Greek: The Greeks are in all their thinking indescribably logical and simple; they were never tired of that, at least in their long great period, as the French so often are. The French are too fond of making a leap to the opposite, and only put up with the logical spirit if, with a host of such leaps to the opposite, it betrays its *social* manners, its social self-depreciation. Logic seems to them as necessary as bread and water, but like these, it seems a sort of prisoner's fare, if taken alone and on its own. In good society one must never want to be entirely and alone right, as all logic does. Hence the little dose of unreason in all French *esprit*.

p. xii. Comparison of Greek culture with that of France at the time of Louis XIV. Decided belief in oneself A leisured class, making great demands on itself and practising great self-discipline. The power of form, will to form *oneself*. 'Happiness' recognized as the aim. A great deal of power and energy behind this formalism. The enjoyment of a way of life which *seems so easy*.

p. xii. One cannot deny that the French have been the most *Christian* people on earth—not that the belief of the masses has been greater with them than with others, but with them the most difficult Christian ideals have become *men* and not remained mere poses, appendages and half-measures. . . .

p. xiii. The struggle against the eighteenth century. The supreme overcoming of it by Goethe and Napoleon. Schopenhauer, too, fights against it; but involuntarily he returns to the seventeenth century—he is a modern Pascal . . . Napoleon: the necessary concomitance of the higher and the monstrous man. 'Man' given back his true place. . . .

Such men as Napoleon must continually return and strengthen belief in the self-sufficiency of the individual: but he himself had been corrupted by the means he had to use, and had lost his nobility of character. Making his way among another type of man, he would have been able to employ other means, and thus it would not have been necessary that a Caesar should be wicked.

p. xiv. . . . the much more uncomfortable *grand fait* that all the great French moralists had a will and character of their own, from Montaigne, Charron, La Rochefoucauld up to Chamfort and Stendhal.

As an artist one has no home in Europe except Paris.

p. xv. Fundamentally it is a small number of the older French writers to whom I always return: I believe only in French culture . . . that I do not *read* Pascal, I *love* him . . . that

I have something of Montaigne's exuberance in my spirit, perhaps, who knows, in my body too; that my artistic taste defends the names Molière, Corneille and Racine not without fury against a wild genius like Shakespeare—that does not exclude the fact that even the most modern Frenchmen would be charming company for me. . . .

p. 3. . . . an abortion of the goddess philosophy, bred with an idiot or a cretin.

p. 18. What then is truth? A turbulent mass of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations, which, poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, decorated, now seem to a people firm, unalterable and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten *are* illusions, metaphors which have become worn out and powerless, coins which have lost their inscription and now count simply as metal, no longer as coins.

Montaigne, too, in relation to the ancients, is an ethical naturalist, but an incomparably more rich and thoughtful one. We are thoughtless naturalists, with all our knowledge.

Men must not be used as things.

p. 19. There is in the world only one way which no one can tread but you. Whither does it lead? Do not ask. Follow it.

I value a philosopher exactly in proportion as he is in a position to give an example.

I know only one other writer whom I would rate equal to Schopenhauer, or even higher, for his honesty: that is Montaigne. That such a man has written has in truth increased the pleasure of living on the earth. Schopenhauer shares with Montaigne another quality too, apart from honesty: a delightful cheerfulness.

As far as I am concerned anyway, since I got to know this most free and vigorous soul, I have to say what he says of Plutarch: I hardly have to look at him but some new limb or wing grows on me!

p. 20. What Montaigne alone stands for in the turbulence of the Reformation-spirit—a coming to rest in oneself, a peaceful self-sufficiency and relaxation (and that is what his best reader, Shakespeare, felt in him)—that is what history represents for the modern spirit.

. . . the first conception has the greatest fire and is certain of the most popular effects. . . . From this first one a power has emerged which swept on to unbridled revolutions, and still does so: for in all socialistic tremors and shaking it is still Rousseau's man stirring, like old Typhon under Etna. Oppressed and half crushed by proud lords and the merciless rich, ruined by the priests and by bad education, made ashamed of himself by ridiculous customs, man in his desperation calls on 'sacred nature' and suddenly feels that it is as far from him as any Epicurean god. His prayers do not reach it, so deeply is he sunk in the chaos of artificiality. In scorn he throws away all the decoration which had recently seemed to him the most human thing about him, his arts and sciences, the achievements of his refined life, he beats with his fist against the walls, in the shade of which he has been so depraved, and cries for light, sunlight, woods and rocks. And when he cries: 'only nature is good, only the natural man is good', he despises himself and yearns for something beyond himself: a mood in which the soul is ready for terrible decisions, but may call up the rarest and most noble feelings from its depths.

p. 22. Now Pascal thinks that men carry on their business and their science, simply to escape thus the most important questions, which any solitude, any real leisure, would force upon them—the questions of the Why, Whence, Whither.

We are afraid, when we are alone and quiet, that something will be whispered in our ears, and so we hate quietness and distract ourselves by society.

p. 23. So long as anyone demands life as he demands happiness, he is still bound by the horizon of the animal, except that he wills with more consciousness what the animal seeks blindly. . . . But there are moments, when we *realize* this. . . .

What would we have to admire in ourselves, what could we depend on? All is vain. Truth to oneself is the greatest thing we can aspire to: for most men delude themselves. With heart-felt scorn of ourselves we reach our highest peak.

Every philosophy must do what I demand, *concentrate* a man. . . .

All action must be gradually coloured by the conviction that our life is to be atoned for.

p. 24. . . . as remedies are akin to deadly poisons.

p. 27. My religion, if I can call anything that, lies in working for the creation of genius.

The more difficult it becomes to recognize the laws of life, the more avidly we yearn for the illusion of that simplification, even if only for moments, the greater becomes the tension between the general awareness of things and the spiritual and moral power of the individual. ***So that the bow will not break,*** we have art.

p. 28. . . . that the free man may be good *or* evil, that it is precisely the man who is not free who is a blot in nature . . . finally, that he who will be free must seek freedom in himself, for no one receives it as miraculous gift.

p. 32. For my taste French is too eloquent, and in dealing with such things as music, too noisy and public. . . .

p. 37. My companion carried La Rochefoucauld's *Maximes*, and we began talking about them. He praised the gift the French have, especially La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Condorcet and Pascal, of sharpening up a thought, so that it is like a medallion in sharpness and relief. And he spoke of the recalcitrance of the material, which attains artistic perfection by the application of the most difficult forms. He supported this by quoting the following verses, which were so striking that I remembered them. . . .

p. 41. To fetter oneself in this way may seem absurd: but there is no other way of escaping naturalism than by first limiting oneself in the strongest (perhaps most arbitrary) manner. So one learns to tread gracefully over the narrow bridges which cross fearful chasms, and one attains as a reward the highest flexibility of movement.

p. 42. For in this connection Voltaire was right: . . .

Not Voltaire's moderate nature, inclined to order, purity and construction, but Rousseau's passionate and foolish half-truths, awoke the optimistic spirit of the Revolution, against which I cry 'Écrasez l'infâme!' Owing to him the spirit of enlightenment and of progressive development has been halted for a long time: let us see, each one of us, whether we can further it again.

p. 44. How could the Ego act unegoistically? . . . or as La Rochefoucauld says: 'si on croit aimer sa maîtresse pour l'amour d'elle, on est bien trompé'. To decide why acts of love are more highly valued than others, that is to say not intrinsically but on account of their *usefulness*, see the above-mentioned investigation 'On the origin of moral feelings'. Even if a man did wish to be all love, like God, to do everything for others, nothing for himself, this would still be impossible, since he must do a great deal for himself in order to be able to do anything for others. And he presupposes that the other is egoist enough to accept all the time these sacrifices, this living for him: so that the men of love and self-sacrifice have an interest in the continuance of loveless egoists who are incapable of self-sacrifice, and the highest morality, to exist, has logically to insist on the existence of immorality (by which it, of course, negates itself).

This is the reason why a powerful man is grateful: His benefactor, by his act, has, so to speak, violated and encroached on the sphere of his power: now he violates the sphere of his benefactor in return by his act of gratitude. It is a gentler form of revenge. If he had not the satisfaction of gratitude, the powerful man would have shown himself powerless and henceforward would be regarded so.

La Rochefoucauld certainly hits the mark, in the most remarkable part of his self-portrait (first printed 1658), when he warns all reasonable people against pity. . . . Perhaps one can warn still more strongly against having pity, if one understands the need of the unfortunate not exactly as foolishness and intellectual weakness, as a sort of disturbance of the mind caused by misfortune (and this is how La Rochefoucauld seems to take it), but as something quite different and more ominous. Look at children, who cry and weep, *in order* to be pitied, and wait for the moment when they will be noticed. . . . And consider whether this eloquent complaining and whimpering, this exhibition of misfortune, does not in fact pursue the aim of *hurting* those present: the pity expressed by the latter is a consolation for the weak and suffering in so far as they see it as a proof that they still have at least some power in their suffering—the power of *hurting*. . . . So the thirst for being pitied is a thirst for self-indulgence, and that at the cost of our fellows; it shows man in all the inconsiderateness of his egoism; but precisely *not* in his 'stupidity' as La Rochefoucauld thinks.

p. 45. The man who poses stubbornly and long, finds it difficult in the end to be anything but his pose. Most men's career even artists, begins with posing, imitation of something else, copying of what is effective.

But are all these unegoistic conditions? Are these moral acts *miracles*, since they are, in Schopenhauer's words 'impossible and yet real'? Is it not clear that in all these cases a man loves something in himself, a thought or desire or quality, more than he loves something *else* in himself, that in fact he splits his being and sacrifices one part to another? . . . In moral action man is not an individual, but essentially *divided*.

p. 46. You will not go far wrong, if you ascribe extreme actions to vanity, middling ones to habit and mean ones to fear.

Just as the bones, the flesh, the viscera and the blood-vessels are enclosed in skin, which makes the sight of a man more bearable, so the impulses and passions of the soul are veiled by vanity—it is the skin of the soul.

Often in dealing with men a kindly deceit is necessary, as if one did not see through the motives of their acts.

Whether a man conceals his bad qualities and defects or openly admits them, in both cases his vanity seeks its advantage: notice how delicately he decides whom he shall conceal these things from, and whom he is honest with.

There is nothing that men are more vindictive about than their humiliation . . . there is no greater folly in dealing with men than to acquire the reputation of a *poseur*, it is worse than if one had never learnt to lie politely.

p. 47. Man is very well defended against himself, against his own spying and his own siege, he can usually only occupy the outer works of his defences. The inner fortress is unapproachable to him, even invisible, unless friends and enemies betray it and lead him in by secret paths.

p. 48. Antithesis is the narrow gate through which error most frequently visits truth.

Most thinkers write badly because they pass on to us not only their thoughts, but the thinking of the thoughts.

You must have a good memory to be able to keep promises. . . . So closely is morality connected with intellectual ability.

There is a *defiance* of oneself, whose most sublimated expressions are to be found in many forms of asceticism.

A delicate soul is oppressed by being beholden to anyone; a coarse one, by having anyone beholden to him.

p. 50. To be a good German, you must un-Germanize yourself.

p. 52. There is no better way of realizing the difference between the earlier and the present-day free-thinking than to think of that sentence which it needed the whole fearlessness of the last century to speak, and which is now regarded as involuntarily *naïve*—I mean Voltaire's remark: 'croyez-moi, mon ami, l'erreur aussi a son mérite'.

To dance in chains—. With every single Greek poet or writer one must ask: what new constraint has he imposed on himself and made delightful to his contemporaries? . . . To dance in chains, to make things difficult for oneself and then to create the illusion of ease—that is the artistic achievement they show us. . . .

p. 53. A good aphorism is too hard for the ravages of time, and is not eaten away in thousands of years, although it serves every age as nourishment: in this it is the most paradoxical thing in literature, the eternal expressed in the transitory, the food which is always valued, like salt, and never becomes stale, as even salt does.

These motives are called ignoble and selfish: well and good, but if they provoke us to a virtue, such as self-denial, duty, order, frugality, moderation, then let us take heed of them, whatever names they are given.

p. 54. If you give someone else in society an opportunity to parade his knowledge or sensibility or experience, you are putting yourself above him, and unless he admits from the start your superiority, you are attacking his vanity—whereas it was precisely that that you thought you were satisfying.

Many a man ill-treats even his friends out of vanity, when witnesses are present, to whom he wants to prove his superiority: and others exaggerate the qualities of their enemies so as to indicate with pride that they are worthy of such enemies.

The most painful feeling there is is to discover that one is always taken for something more than one is. For then one must admit to oneself: something in you is deception, your words, your expression, your gestures, your eye, your actions—and this deceitful something is as necessary to you as your otherwise honest frankness, but continually depreciates the value and effect of it.

You gave him an opportunity to show greatness of character, and he did not use it. He will never forgive you.

In the golden scabbard of pity is sometimes sheathed the dagger of envy.

p. 55. The wanderer: I thought man's shadow was his vanity; but this would never ask: shall I flatter you?

The shadow: Man's vanity, as far as I know it, never asks, as I have twice asked, whether it may speak. It speaks all the time.

So arises the conviction that in society what determines whether we sail safely or are

shipwrecked is much more what we *seem* to be than what we *are*—a conviction which must be our main guide in all dealings with society.

He soon notices that not what he *is* but what he is *taken for* determines his success or failure: here is the origin of *vanity*. The powerful man seeks by all means to increase *belief* in his power. . . . We only know vanity in its weakest forms, in its sublimations and in small doses, because we live in a late and very much softened state of society; originally it was the most advantageous quality, the strongest means of self-preservation.

There would be no moral casuistry, if there were no casuistry of advantage.

Without vanity and selfishness—where are all the virtues of man?

p. 56. We praise altruism originally because it is useful, and we blame egoism because it is harmful. But what if this were an error? But what if egoism were useful in a much higher degree than altruism, even to other men? Perhaps we have always considered as egoism what is in fact *foolish* egoism. So really we were praising cleverness?—Certainly goodness and stupidity do go together, we speak of 'un bon homme', etc.

An important kind of pleasure, and therefore of morality, springs from habit. . . .

All states and social orders, classes, marriage, education, law—all these derive their power and permanence only from the fact that limited minds believe in them.

p. 57. It would be senseless to disregard eternal advantage for our temporal comfort.

The most mature thing ever thought about men lies in the famous sentence: 'the ego is hateful'; the most childish in the still more famous one: 'love your neighbour as yourself'. In the first all knowledge of men has ceased; in the second it has not yet begun.

Pilate, with his question: 'What is truth?' is now often brought up as an advocate of Christ, to cast suspicion on all that we know and can know as deception, and to erect the Cross on the terrifying basis of the impossibility of knowledge.

p. 58. Equilibrium is therefore a very important concept for the oldest doctrine of law and morals: equilibrium is the basis of *justice*.

It looks as though all was falling into chaos, the old being lost and the new ineffective and weakening. . . . We hesitate, but we must not therefore be fearful and sacrifice what we have just won. And anyway we *cannot* go back to the old, we have burnt our boats; all we can do is be brave, whatever is the outcome—step it out, let us move onwards!

One or the other one must have, either a naturally light mind, or a mind lightened by art and knowledge.

p. 59. Everyone has innate talent, but only a few are born and trained to the degree of toughness, stamina and energy that their talent is realized, and they become what they are, that is to say, express their talent in works and activity.

Whatever you are, be to yourself a source of experience.

One possesses opinions as one possesses fishes—that is to say, in so far as one owns a fish-pond. One must go fishing and have good luck—then one has one's own fishes, and one's own opinions. I mean *living* fishes and opinions. Many are content if they have a stuffed fish, and in their heads 'convictions'.

p. 60. Habit draws a spider's web of ever increasing strength around us.

All is in flux, true—but all is *flowing*, to a definite goal.

p. 61. Probability, but no truth: the illusion of freedom, but no freedom—these are the two fruits which prevent us mixing up the tree of knowledge with that of life.

They all want to force us to a decision in fields where neither belief nor knowledge are necessary. . . . We must become good neighbours of the nearest things again, and not scornfully look above them to clouds and phantoms, as we have been doing.

p. 63. Every great love brings with it the terrible thought of killing its object, so that it may be freed once and for all from the torturing process of change: for love is more terrified of change than of destruction.

Unfortunately we know from historical experience that every such upheaval brings the wildest energy to expression in the form of monstrous excesses long buried in the past: so that an upheaval may well be a source of power to weakened man, but can never organize and control and fulfil human nature.

p. 64. Men like Rousseau have the knack of using their weakness, their bad qualities, as dung for their talent, so to speak. When Rousseau bemoans the ruin and decadence of society as a miserable consequence of culture, he is in fact expressing a personal experience. The bitterness of this experience gives him the keenness of his general condemnation and poisons the arrows he shoots; he unburdens himself in the first place as an individual and wants to find a remedy which will directly heal society, but indirectly thereby heal himself.

p. 65. All the half-demented, sentimental and self-intoxicated fury which was the real substance of the revolution and had become flesh and spirit in Rousseau before the Revolution —this whole complex claimed with perfidious enthusiasm the Enlightenment as its leader.

p. 66. We speak of nature and forget *ourselves*: but we too are nature *quand même*. So nature is something quite different from what we understand by the word.

p. 69. If you do not believe in a circular process of all things, you *must* believe in an arbitrary God. This is the basis of my view, in contrast to all previous theistic ones.

Life—that means continually expelling from oneself something that wishes death; it means being cruel and merciless to all that is weak and old in us, and not only in us. It means, therefore, being without respect for the dying, the miserable and the old. Being continually a murderer?

p. 70. Man has been educated by his errors. Firstly he has always seen himself incompletely, secondly he has ascribed to himself fictitious qualities, thirdly he has incorrectly perceived his relation to the animals and to nature, and fourthly he has always been inventing new tables of virtues, so that now one human impulse and condition was placed first and now another. If one discounts the effects of these errors, one has discounted humanity, kindness and 'human dignity'.

We have killed him. . . . But how were we able to do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do, when we cut this earth away from its sun? Whither is it moving now? . . . Is there still an over and an under? Are we not wandering through an endless Nothing? . . . The highest and most mighty being that the world ever possessed has died under our knives— and who will wipe this blood away from us? . . . Is not the greatness of our deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods, in order to seem worthy of it?

Amor Fati: that shall be my love from now on! I will wage no war against what I hate. I will not accuse, I will not even accuse the accusers. Ignoring will be my only denial. And, taking it all in all, I will be a yea-sayer yet!

p. 71. What is custom? A higher authority which is obeyed not because it commands what is useful to us, but because it *commands*.

'What a good pillow is doubt for a well-built head!'—this remark of Montaigne's always embittered Pascal.

p. 72. He who really possesses himself, that is to say, has finally *conquered* himself, regards it henceforward as his own privilege to punish and to pardon and to pity himself: he is not forced to resign this to others, but he can, of course, freely make a present of it, to a friend, for example—but he knows that he thereby grants a *right* and rights are only granted from the possession of power.

p. 73. That is a noble ideal you have before your eyes, but are *you* a noble enough stone that such a godlike image could be hewn out of you? And if not, is not all your work just a barbaric chiselling? an insult to your ideal?

'Rather owe a debt than pay with a coin without my head on it'—so demands our sovereignty.

I wish no one to imitate me: I wish all to set their own goals, as I do.

I want more, I am no seeker. I want to create my own sun for myself.

p. 74. . . . you are always someone different. . . . We deny and we must do so, because something in us wishes to live and to approve itself, something that we perhaps do not yet know, not yet see!

. . . because it reveals the fact that you have not yet discovered youself, not yet created your own personal ideal—this *could not be* the same as another's, and certainly not that of all! . . . that *every* action, whether seen from its motives or its results, is and remains an impenetrable thing . . . we wish to *become what we are*.

And as long as you feel any shame for yourselves, you are not of us.

p. 75. We go on drawing conclusions from judgements that we regard as false, from doctrines that we no longer believe—because of our emotions.

'To deny morality'—that can mean, in the first place: to deny that the moral motives that men adduce really govern their actions—this is the assertion that morality is a matter of words and is part of the deceit of men (whether crude or subtle, as in self-deception), and perhaps most of all in those famous for their virtue. Or it can mean, secondly: to deny that moral judgements are based on any truths at all—in this case we grant that these really are the motives of action, but urge that errors, as the bases of moral judgements, thus are the motives in moral actions. This is my point of view, but I would not deny

that in very many cases a delicate mistrust, in accordance with the first viewpoint, which is La Rochefoucauld's, is in place and of great value.

p. 76. Most men, whatever they may think and say of their 'egoism', do all their life nothing for their ego, but only for the phantom-ego which has formed in the minds of those around them and transmitted itself to them; as a consequence they live in a fog of impersonal or half-personal opinions and arbitrary, so to speak poetic, values . . . all these men who do not know themselves believe in the bloodless abstraction 'man', that is to say, in a fiction. . . . And all for the reason that every one of them, among the majority, has no ego which is really his own to set against the generally-accepted fictitious ego and destroy it.

While 'we' think we are bemoaning the violence of some impulse, it is in essence one impulse which complains against *another*; that is to say, our perception of suffering at such violent impulses presupposes that there are other impulses, as violent or more so, which are fighting them, and our intellect must take sides.

. . . that even our moral judgements and values are only images and fantasies grounded in a physiological process of which we are unaware, a sort of acquired language to indicate certain nervous stimuli?

p. 77. Our opinion of ourselves, though, which we have arrived at by this false path, the so-called 'ego', henceforward contributes to our character and our fate.

One is empty and wants to fill himself, the other is overfull and wants to empty himself —both are driven to seek someone to serve their ends. And this process, in its highest form, we call by the one name: love. And love is supposed to be unegoistic!

Some are made ashamed by great praise, others impudent.

What men find so difficult to understand is their ignorance about themselves, from the earliest days to the present . . . in this principle they were still the heirs of the general misconception that there can be knowledge about the essence of an action. . . . Actions are *never* what they seem . . . all actions are in essence unknown.

p. 78. Till now there have been those who glorified man and those who decried him, but both of them from a *moral* standpoint. La Rochefoucauld and the Christians found the sight of man *hateful*; but this is a moral judgement, and no other standard was known. *We* class man as part of nature, neither good nor evil.

La Rochefoucauld is only wrong in this, that he rates the motives he considers the real ones lower than the others, the ostensible ones: that is to say, he still fundamentally *believes* in the others and takes his standard from them; he decries man in thinking him incapable of certain motives.

Greed and love: how differently we feel in respect of these two words . . . and yet these could be the same impulse under two names. . . . Our love of our neighbour, is it not an impulse to new possession? . . . Our pleasure in ourselves seeks to preserve itself by continually changing something new *into* ourselves—that is what possession means . . . we have taken from this love the concept of love as the opposite of egoism, while in fact it is perhaps the most bare-faced expression of egoism. . . . It may be that here and there on earth there is a kind of continuation of love, in which that greedy desire of two persons for each other gives place to a new desire, a *common* yearning for an ideal beyond both of them: but who knows this love? who has experienced it? Its real name is *friendship* . . .

. . . we feel here as though a child were talking to an old man or a beautiful young idealist girl to La Rochefoucauld; we know better what virtue is!

p. 79. Generosity is with rich men often a kind of shyness.

He perseveres with a cause in which he has lost faith, out of defiance—but he calls it 'loyalty'.

What? You marvel at the categorical imperative in you? This 'integrity' of your so-called moral judgement? This 'unconditional' feeling, 'as I judge, so must all men judge in this'? Marvel rather at your selfishness. . . . For it is selfishness to feel one's own judgement as a general law, and moreover a blind, mean and craven selfishness, because it reveals the fact that you have not yet discovered yourself, not yet created your own personal ideal—this *could not be* the same as another's, and certainly not that of all!

p. 80. 'What a good pillow is doubt for a well-built head'—this remark of Montaigne's always embittered Pascal, for no one ever desired a good pillow so much as he. Why did he not take it then?

Granted that we felt towards the other as he feels to himself—what Schopenhauer calls pity and should rather be called sympathy—then we would have to hate him, if, like Pascal, he thought himself hateful. And in general that is how Pascal looked at men, and

primitive Christianity too, which was 'convicted' under Nero of teaching hatred of the human race, as Tacitus tells us.

If our ego, according to Pascal and Christianity, is always hateful, how could we ever allow and accept that others should love us—whether God or men? It would be contrary to all good manners to let oneself be loved while knowing well that one only deserved hatred—to say nothing of any other unlikable emotions.

p. 81. A drop of blood too much or too little in the brain can make our life indescribably hard and miserable, and we suffer more from this drop than Prometheus did from his vulture. But the most terrible thing is when the sufferer does not even *know* that this drop is the cause, but thinks it is 'the devil' or 'sin'.

Pascal's conversation with Jesus is more beautiful than anything in the New Testament! It is the saddest loveliness ever written. No one since has written of *this* Jesus, which is why after Port-Royal Christianity is everywhere in decline.

Pascal advised us to get used to Christianity and we would find our passions fading. This is to extract advantage from one's *dishonesty*, and to be glad of it. Pascal's main fault: he thinks he has proved that Christianity is *true*, because it is *necessary*—this presupposes that a good and true Providence exists, which makes everything necessary also *true*. But there could be necessary errors! And finally: the necessity *could* only appear so, because we have become so used to the error that it has become second nature to us.

p. 82. Only when he has knowledge of all things will man have knowledge of himself—for things are simply the limits of man.

We are in our web, we spiders, and whatever we catch in it must be something that is catchable by it.

p. 83. That hot, burning feeling of the ecstatic: 'this is truth', this grasping and seeing in those whose fantasy is in control over them, this groping at another world—this is a disease of the intellect, no way to knowledge.

'I have no idea what I am doing, I have no idea what I should do'. You are right, but do not despair: your actions are determined, in every instant.

So perhaps the urge to activity is fundamentally a flight from oneself?—so Pascal would ask. And he is right. This proposition is borne out by the highest examples of the urge to activity.

There stands Pascal, in the union of fire, spirit and honesty, the first of all Christians—and just think what had to be united here!

If one compares Kant and Schopenhauer with Plato, Spinoza, Pascal, Rousseau, Goethe in regard not to their minds but their souls, then the first-named thinkers lose—their thoughts do not compose a passionate spiritual development, there is no novel there, no crises, catastrophes and death-scenes to be guessed, their thinking is not at the same time the involuntary biography of a soul, but only. . . .

p. 84. Pascal's position is a *passion*, he shows all the signs and consequences of happiness and misery and the deepest earnestness. So it is really ludicrous to see him so proudly reject passion—it is a sort of love which scorns everyone else and pities men to be independent of them. Pascal has not any *useful* love in view, but only a waste, it is all a private egoism, as far as he can see. That from this complex of activities a new generation arises with its passions, its habits and its means of satisfying them (or failing to satisfy them)—that he cannot see. Always only the individual, not what springs from it.

Contrast to Pascal: have *we* no strength in self-mastery, as he has? He for the sake of God, we for our own honesty.

To lose this passionate interest in ourselves and turn it outwards on to things (science) is now possible. What do I matter? Pascal could not have said that!

I have Pascal's scorn and Schopenhauer's curse on me! . . . Certainly with the devotion of a friend who is not crushed, but remains a friend and not a lover and a fool.

p. 85. The best realization of ideal life which I have ever really got to know.

Whatever I now do or omit to do is as important for the future as the greatest event of the past: in this immense perspective of their effects all actions are equally great and equally small.

But you can see the direction of my argument, namely that it is finally always a *metaphysical* belief on which our belief in science rests—that even we present-day investigators, we godless positivists, we still take our flame from the fire lit by the belief of a thousand years, the belief of Christians and also of Plato, that God is truth, that truth is divine. But what if this belief proved less and less credible, if nothing seemed divine any more except error and blindness and lies—if God Himself turned out to be our longest-lived lie?

p. 86. Chamfort's last words are well known. . . . Those really are not the words of a dying Frenchman!

'He who at forty is not a misanthropist, has never loved men', Chamfort used to say.

p. 88. If it is true that our civilization has something pitiful about it, then you have the choice, either to conclude with Rousseau: 'this pitiful civilization is guilty of causing our bad morality', or to argue against Rousseau: 'our *good* morality is the cause of our pitiful civilization. Our weak unmanly social concepts of good and evil and the enormous influence they exercise on us, body and soul, have made our bodies and our souls weak and *broken* the independent self-sufficient men, the pillars of a *strong* civilization; where you still meet *bad* morality, there are the last remnants of these pillars'. So we set paradox against paradox! The truth cannot be on both sides; but is it on either one of them? Think!

Our love of knowledge has become a passion which shrinks from no sacrifice and fears nothing except its own extinction. . . . Mankind may even be destroyed by this passion for knowledge! but this too does not deter us! We hate barbarism—we would rather see the ruin of mankind than the decline of knowledge!

p. 89. In recent centuries science was pursued partly in the hope of better understanding God's goodness and wisdom by it (this was the main motive with the great Englishmen, like Newton), partly because knowledge was thought to be *useful*, since morality, knowledge and happiness were all connected (this was what inspired the great Frenchmen, like Voltaire), partly because science was thought to be something selfless, harmless, self-sufficient, truly innocent, in which man's evil impulses had no place (this was Spinoza's main motive, as a scientist he felt himself divine)—that is to say science was based on one or other of these three errors!

p. 90. To give your character 'style'—that is a great and rare art! It arises when a man surveys all the strengths and weaknesses of his nature and fits them in to an artistic plan, so that everything has the stamp of art and even his weakness is delightful. A mass of 'second nature' is added and much of the 'first nature' eliminated—both things need much practice and daily exercise. . . . Finally, when the process is complete, we can see the same taste governing and controlling all, both great things and small: whether it is a good taste or a bad one matters less than one thinks—enough that it is *one* taste. . . . For one thing is necessary, that man must achieve contentment in himself, whether by this or that art or style; for only then is he bearable to look at.

p. 91. . . . who perhaps had the most thoughtful eyes and ears of all Frenchmen of this century. Perhaps Stendhal had too much of an Englishman or a German in him to be acceptable in Paris?

With Dostoevsky it was the same as earlier with Stendhal: a chance acquaintanceship, a book picked up in a bookshop, only the name of the author familiar—and then suddenly the instinct that here was a close relation.

p. 92. . . . I regard only Giacomo Leopardi, Prosper Mérimée, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walter Savage Landor (the author of the 'Imaginary Conversations') as worthy of the title 'master of prose'.

p. 99. The superman is the sense of the earth. Let your will say: may the superman be the sense of the earth.

p. 100. Was that life? Good, I'll have it once more!

p. 102. I know you well, he spoke with a hard voice, you are the *murderer of God*. Let me pass. You could not bear that He should *see* you, see *you* to your inmost being, you most hateful man! You took your vengeance on this witness!

'It is bad enough', answered the wanderer and shadow, 'you are right, but what can I do about it? The old God lives still, Zarathustra, say what you will. The most hateful man is the cause of the trouble: he awoke Him again. And if he says that he once killed Him—death is only a prejudice with Gods.

Man is something that must be overcome.

If you praise Him as a god of Love, your idea of love is not high enough. Did not this god also wish to be a *judge*? But a lover loves beyond all rewards and punishments.

And He Himself did not love enough: otherwise He would not have been so annoyed at not being loved. All great love does not require love in return, but something more.

Anything done from love is not moral, but religious.

p. 103. He who once crosses the bridge to mysticism, does not escape without stigmata on all his thoughts. . . . When yearning and scepticism are joined, you have mysticism.

Stoicism would have been quite impossible in a morally enlightened world—every word of Balthasar Gracian or La Rochefoucauld or Pascal has the whole of Greek *taste* against it.

p. 104. Yes, this ego and the contradictions and confusions of the ego speak most honestly of its being, this creative, willing, valuing ego which is the measure and value of all things.

But the wind, that we cannot see, tortures and bends it how it will. We are tortured and bent worst by unseen hands. . . . The more it strives up to the heights and brightness, the more its roots press down into the earth, the dark and deep—into evil.

p. 105. 'I', you say, and are proud of the word. But a greater force, which you will not believe, is your body and its higher reason, it does not *say* 'I', but *acts* 'I'.

The self always listens and searches, it compares, constrains, conquers, destroys. It rules, and rules the ego too. The self says to the ego: 'feel pain here'. And the ego suffers and thinks how it may cease suffering. And that is what its thinking is *for*. The self says to the ego: 'here feel pleasure', and it feels joy and thinks how it may feel it again. And that is what its thinking is *for*!

Oh, if you only understood my precept: 'Do what you will—but first be such men as *can* will! Love your neighbour as yourself, but first be such men as love *themselves*!'

p. 106. There are people who would force everyone to a Yes or No, to accept or reject their whole personality. Rousseau was one of them. Their megalomania is derived from mistrust of themselves.

And if you would be a creator in good and evil, you must first be a destroyer and break up values. So the highest evil springs from the highest good—and this is the *creative* good!

p. 107. Oh, my friends, let your personalities be in your acts, as a mother is in her child. Let that be your recipe for virtue.

'*That* is *my* way, where is yours?' So I answered those who asked me for 'the' way. *The* way—there is no such thing!

I am Zarathustra, the godless one. I cook every chance in my *own* pot. And only when it is cooked do I welcome it as my meat. And in truth many a chance came arrogantly to me, but my will spoke to it *more* arrogantly, and then it fell on its knees!

Man is difficult to discover, and most difficult to himself; the mind often lies about the soul. This is because of the spirit of heaviness and inertia in us. But he has discovered himself who speaks: That is *my* good and *my* evil. Thus he has silenced the dwarf who repeats: 'objective good, objective evil, the same for all'.

p. 111. From your poisons you brewed your remedy, your cow of misery you milked, and now you drink sweet milk from her udders. And nothing evil springs henceforward from you, except the evil born of the conflict of your virtues!

The thought is one thing, the deed another, and the image of the deed in your mind another. These are not causally connected.

Are you a slave? You cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? You cannot have friends.

One goes to his neighbour in search of himself, another to escape from himself.

Often with love we are only trying to circumvent envy.

Often we attack and make an enemy, simply to conceal our vulnerability.

And I learnt this among you too: He who praises pretends to be returning something, but really he wants to be given more.

Morality is human pretentiousness towards nature. The best mask that we wear is our own face.

p. 112. All good is a modification of something evil, every god has a devil for father.

Cruelty is a displaced and spiritualized sensuality.

Small suffering makes us small and great suffering great. Our egoism should therefore lead us to search for great suffering.

La Rochefoucauld stopped half-way: he denied the 'good' qualities of men; he should have also denied the 'bad'. We still lack the 'inverted' La Rochefoucauld, who would show us how the vanity and egoism of the good have stigmatized certain human qualities as blameworthy and finally *made* them evil and harmful.

p. 114. Whoever has long tried, like me, with a puzzling persistence, to get to the bottom of pessimism and to free it from the half-Christian, half-German narrowness and simplicity which characterizes its latest form in this century, the Schopenhauerian philosophy; whoever has really looked with an asiatic, a super-asiatic eye at the most world-denying of all possible attitudes—beyond good and evil, and no longer, as with Buddha and Schopenhauer, in the toils of morality—will, by that very fact, without actually wanting it, have opened his eyes to the opposite ideal: the ideal of the bravest, most living, most yea-saying

man, who has not only made his peace and adjusted himself to all that was and is, but also wants it again as it was and is, in all eternity, insatiably crying *da capo*, not only to himself, but to the whole play, and not only to the play fundamentally but to the power that *needs* this play and makes *us* need it.

p. 116. . . . the French were his favourites, both the classical writers and those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and especially the moralists, psychologists and story-writers. At his behest I read Fromentin, Doudan, the Goncourts' pictures of culture and of customs, and paid still more attention to Stendhal, Mérimée, Taine and Bourget. Of modern poets he was interested in Vigny, de Lisle, and Sully Prudhomme. Stendhal certainly impressed Nietzsche mainly because he controlled with iron strength his highly sensitive nature, which was given to strong emotions. . . . As an opponent of the French Revolution and one who scorned it . . . Nietzsche welcomed Taine's great work on it with a happy and consoled heart. The volume on Napoleon made the most impression on him. . . .

Renan was antipathetic to Nietzsche.

p. 117. Our honesty, we free spirits—let us take care lest it become our vanity, our make-up, our limitation, our stupidity.

We must destroy the existent religions, if only to eliminate these absurd evaluations, as if a Jesus Christ could bear comparison with a Plato, or a Luther with a Montaigne.

'The rules of conscience, which we ascribe to nature, spring rather from habit. We all honour in our hearts the opinions and customs which are current and esteemed in our country, so that we cannot disobey them without pangs of conscience and always feel some pleasure in obeying them'.

The value of an action depends on *who* does it and whether it springs from the surface of him or the depths—that is to say, to what degree it is an *individual* action.

p. 118. The value of a thing often lies not in what one can achieve by it, but in what one has paid for it—what it *costs*.

Egoism! But nobody has asked what *sort* of ego. People treat all egos as equal. That is the consequence of the slave-theory of universal suffrage and 'equality'.

That the *value* of the world lies in our interpretation (that perhaps somewhere other, non-human, interpretations are possible), that all interpretations hitherto have been perspective valuations, by which we preserve ourselves in life, that is in the will to power and to the *growth* of power, that every advance of man has brought the overcoming of previous narrow interpretations, that every strengthening and widening of power has opened new perspectives and shown us new horizons—this view runs through my writings. The world, as far as it concerns us, is *false*, that is to say is not a fact, but a hypothesis and a pattern formed from a small sum of observations; it is in 'flux', something changing, a fiction continually being displaced, which never comes any nearer to truth—for there *is* no 'truth'.

p. 121. And Helvétius argues that we strive for power to enjoy the pleasures it brings—he takes the striving for power as striving for pleasure—as hedonism!

Whatever value one places on truth and honesty and altruism, it might yet be that illusion, the will to self-deception, selfishness and concupiscence were more valuable and more fundamental to life. And it might even be possible that the value of those good and estimable qualities lay precisely in the fact that they are related to the opposite ones, bound up with them, perhaps identical with them.

So I do not believe that an 'impulse to knowledge' is the father of philosophy, but that some other impulse (here as elsewhere) is using knowledge (and error) as a tool. If you study the fundamental impulses of man, in so far as they are here the inspiring genius (or demon) and are seeking gratification, you will find that they have all done some philosophy—and that every one of them would like to present *itself* as the final end of existence and as natural lord over all the others. For every impulse is a tyrant, and *as such* tries to philosophize.

p. 122. Even behind all logic and its apparent independence of movement stand valuations, or in fact physiological demands, designed to preserve a certain kind of life.

He who scorns himself, respects himself in his very scorn.

The will to overcome a passion is finally only the will of another or several other passions.

He who has really made a sacrifice is aware that he got something out of it—perhaps some part of himself for the sacrifice of some other part—that he gave up something to gain something else, or to *be* something more, or anyway, to feel that he was.

What? A great man? I see only the mummer of his own ideal.

What a period finds evil is usually an out-of-date relic of what was previously found good—the atavism of an old ideal.

p. 123. (Morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as hypocrisy, as disease, as misunderstanding, but also as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as restraint, as poison.)

The ascetic ideal has a *goal*—and the goal is so general that all other human interests seem small and narrow by comparison; it turns periods of history, peoples, individuals, pitilessly to this goal, it allows no other interpretation, no other goal, it decries, slanders, approves, confirms all things in the sense of its interpretations (and was there ever a more logical system of interpretations?); it admits no allegiance, it believes in its own supremacy and its unconditional authority over all other powers—it believes that there is no power on earth which is not derived from it and has value only as its tool, as a means to its goal. . . .

Egoism and its problems: Christian gloominess in La Rochefoucauld, who smelt out egoism everywhere, and thought that this *lessened* the value of things and virtues! Against this I have sought to prove that there *can* be nothing other than egoism—that in men whose ego is weak and thin the power of loving also is weakened—that lovers show in their love precisely the strength of their ego—that love is an expression of egoism, etc. . . .

The involuntary naïveté of La Rochefoucauld, who thinks he is saying something bold and free and paradoxical—in those days 'truth' in psychological questions was something to astound—for example: . . .

p. 124. To find out, for instance, what sort of history the problem of *knowledge and conscience* has had in the soul of the religious, one would have to be as deep, as hurt, as monstrous, as Pascal's intellectual conscience was.

p. 125. In man is a union of *creature* and *creator*: in man is material, fragment, superfluity, clay, mud, nonsense, chaos; but in man too is creator, sculptor, hammer-hardness, the divine spectator and the seventh day—do you understand this contrast?

We no longer believe that truth remains truth when we unveil it. . . . To-day we feel it a matter of decency that one should not want to see everything naked, to be present at all things, to understand and 'know' them all. . . . We should respect nature's *modesty* more, its garment of enigmas and varied uncertainties. Perhaps truth is a woman, who has her reasons for not revealing her reasons.

p. 126. . . . in a spiritual context, this is Pascal's principle: . . .

Without Christian belief, said Pascal, you must find yourself, and nature and history, un monstre et un chaos'. This prophecy we have *fulfilled*, after the weakly optimistic eighteenth century had *rationalized* man and made him *pretty*. Schopenhauer and Pascal—in a fundamental sense Schopenhauer is the first who takes up Pascal's direction again: un monstre et un chaos, therefore something to be *denied*—history, nature, man himself!

'Our inability to know the truth is the result of our ruin, our moral decline': so Pascal. And so fundamentally Schopenhauer. 'The deeper the ruin of reason, the more necessary the doctrine of salvation'—or, in Schopenhauerian terms, the denial of life.

If man is sinful through and through, then he cannot but hate himself. And fundamentally he should regard his fellow-men with no other feelings than he regards himself. Love of one's fellows needs a justification, which it has in that *God has commanded it.*—From this follows that all the natural instincts of man (to love and so on) seem forbidden in themselves, and only after we have disowned them can they be re-admitted in obedience to God. Pascal, the admirable *logician* of Christianity, did go as far as this! Think of his relation to his sister. 'Not to allow oneself to be loved' seemed to him Christian!

p. 127. Still more desperately Pascal: he realized that in that case our knowledge itself must be corrupt and falsified—that *revelation* was necessary even for us to understand the world only to deny it.

Man, a small, over-strained, species which luckily will come to an end: his life on earth a moment, an interim, an exception without results, which remains irrelevant to the total nature of the earth: the earth itself, like every star, a hiatus between two nothings, a happening without plan, reason, will, consciousness, the worst sort of necessity, *blind* necessity—Against such thoughts something in us revolts: the serpent of our vanity speaks to us: 'that must all be false, *since* we revolt against it—could not all that be illusion?'

Rousseau, in his favouring of the poor and women and the people as sovereign, is right in the Christian tradition: all the mistakes and virtues of a slave can be studied in him, even the most incredible deceit (and *he* wants to teach us justice!). His opposite: Napoleon, like the ancients, a scorner of men.

The deepest and most inexhaustible books will probably always have something of the aphoristic and unpredictable character of Pascal's *Pensées* about them.

p. 128. Rousseau: or the return to nature in impuris naturalibus.

I too speak of a 'return to nature', though it is not really a going-back, but a *rising onwards*, upwards into the free and even fearful nature and naturalness, which concerns itself with great tasks and has the right to do so. To put my conception in a parable: Napoleon was a return to nature, as I understand it. . . . But Rousseau, whither did *he* want to return? Rousseau, that first modern man, idealist and *canaille* in one, who *needed* his moral 'dignity' to bear the sight of himself; sick with uncontrollable vanity and scorn of himself. This abortion planting himself on the threshold of modern times, he too wanted to go 'back to nature'—once again, whither did he want to return? I hate Rousseau *in* the revolution itself, for it is the historical expression of this combination of idealist and *canaille*. . . .

p. 129. Against Rousseau: Man is *unfortunately* no longer evil enough, the opponents of Rousseau who said 'man is a beast of prey' were unfortunately wrong. The curse is not the *ruin* of man, but the way he has become delicate and moral. . . Rousseau is a symptom of self-denigration and heated vanity—both signs that he lacked dominating *will*. . . .

Instead of the 'natural man' of Rousseau the nineteenth century discovered a *truer* type of man—it had the courage to do so. Broadly, the Christian conception of man has been re-established. What we have *not* had the courage to do is to *approve* precisely this type of man, and to see in him the future of humanity guaranteed.

p. 130. Oh Voltaire! Oh Humanity! Oh Foolishness! There is some point in 'truth', in the *search* for truth; and when man carries it out in too human a fashion—'il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien'—then I wager he finds nothing!

p. 131. There are even cases where disgust and enchantment go together: for instance where, by some freak of nature, genius is granted to such a misshapen monstrosity, such a one as the Abbé Galiani, the most profound, most penetrating and perhaps the dirtiest man of his century—he was much more profound than Voltaire, and therefore a good bit more reticent!

But Machiavellism . . . is superhuman.

p. 133. A last trait in the picture of the free-thinking philosopher is added by Stendhal, whom I cannot prevent myself from calling attention to, for the sake of German taste—for he goes clean contrary to it. 'Pour être bon philosophe, says this last great psychologist. . . .

p. 134. 'The beautiful, said Kant, is what gives *disinterested* pleasure'. Disinterested! Compare with this another definition, by a real connoisseur and artist—Stendhal, who calls beauty a 'promesse de bonheur'. Here, anyway, the very quality that Kant singles out is rejected and denied, this *désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal? . . . Stendhal, as I say, a no less sensual, but more happily organized nature than Schopenhauer, singles out a different effect of beauty: 'beauty *promises* happiness', to him the fact seems to be the *excitation* of the will (of the 'interest') by the beautiful.

Stendhal, one of the luckiest chances of my life (for everything which affected me came to me by chance, never by anyone's recommendation), Stendhal is quite invaluable with his psychologist's eye that anticipates things . . . and finally not least as an *honest* atheist, a rare species in France, difficult to find (with all respect to Prosper Mérimée). Perhaps I am a little envious of Stendhal? He stole the best atheistic quip from me, one which would have suited me well: 'the only excuse for God, is that He does not exist'. Somewhere I have said: what was the biggest objection to the world so far? God!

p. 139. We should rank periods of history by their *positive powers*—on this reckoning the wasteful and decisive time of the Renaissance was the last *great* period. . . .

p. 143. The three centuries. Their differing sensibilities can best be expressed like this:

Aristocratic culture: Descartes. Dominance of *reason*. Witness the sovereignty of the *will*.

Feminine culture: Rousseau. Dominance of *feeling*. Witness the sovereignty of the *senses*, false.

Animal culture: Schopenhauer. Dominance of *desire*. Witness the sovereignty of *animality*, more honest, but gloomy.

All in all, there are signs that the nineteenth century European is less ashamed of his instincts; he has made a good step towards admitting to himself his fundamental naturalness, that is, his immorality, and that without bitterness—he is strong enough to bear this view of himself.

To some people that may sound as though *corruption* has increased; and certainly man has not come closer to the 'nature' of which Rousseau spoke, but rather has advanced in the civilization which he *abhored.* We have become stronger, we have come once again nearer the seventeenth century, I mean the end of it (Dancourt, Lesage, Regnard).

My struggle against Rousseau's eighteenth century, his 'nature', his 'good man', his belief in the supremacy of feeling—against the softening, weakening, moralizing of man: an ideal that is born of hatred of any aristocratic culture, and in practice is the dominance of feelings of resentment, used as a standard for the battle.

p. 144. They never went through a seventeenth century of hard self-scrutiny like the French—a La Rochefoucauld or a Descartes are a hundred times superior to the best of the Germans in honesty.

There are still naïve observers who think there are such things as 'immediate certainties', such as 'I think' or, as Schopenhauer's superstition insisted, 'I will'.

... the father of rationalism (and therefore grandfather of the Revolution), who recognized only the authority of reason: but reason is only a tool and Descartes was superficial.

p. 145. Fundamentally it is a small number of the older French writers that I always come back to: I believe only in French culture ... that I do not *read* Pascal, but *love* him ... that I have something of Montaigne's exuberance in my spirit, perhaps also, who knows, in my body ... that my artistic taste defends the names Molière, Corneille and Racine not without fury against a wild genius like Shakespeare: that does not exclude the fact that even the most modern Frenchmen would be charming company for me. ...

... in this he is moving in the opposite direction and seeking precisely the opposite of what the poets of a noble culture, like Corneille, for example, sought. For these latter took pleasure and satisfaction in dominating their perhaps more strongly developed senses by the intellect, and leading their clear, delicate intellect to victory over the brutal claims of colours, sounds and shapes; whereby they were, I think, on the track of the ancient Greeks, however little they realized it.

p. 146. In La Rochefoucauld a very *noble* quality of mind in contemporary society shines through: he himself is a disillusioned idealist, who, inspired by Christianity, seeks out the hateful names for the motives of the time.

p. 148. ... a noble, retiring artist and one who scorned those sloppy feelings which a democratic age praises as its 'noblest' feelings ... a genuine soul, if not a pure one, in surroundings which were false and filthy.

... In France the Christian ideal came to full flowering, so far as the pale Northern sun allowed it. How strangely pious are even these recent French sceptics to our taste, whenever there is Celtic blood in their heredity! How Catholic, how un-German Auguste Comte's sociology smells to us, with its Roman logic of instinct! How jesuitical, despite his loathing of the Jesuits, that charming and wise Cicerone of Port-Royal, Sainte-Beuve! And Ernst Renan—how unapproachable it sounds to us Northerners, when Renan's writing continually betrays how a minute particle of religious tension disturbs the equilibrium of his sensual (in the best sense) and comfortably settled soul. ...

Main premiss: one must not see the task of the higher species as *leading* the lower (as, for instance, Comte does), the lower must be regarded as the *basis* upon which the higher lives for its *own* task, and on which it depends for this.

Have fun with the idealists who think they have 'truth' when they feel 'good' or 'sublime'. The classic case is Renan, as quoted by Bourget.

... and the latter, with his famous formula 'vivre pour autrui' has really outdone, Christianity itself.

p. 149. Just repeat these fine sentences of his, and what annoyance and rejection arises in our probably less fine and harder, that is to say more German, soul as an answer! ... These sentences are so completely antagonistic to my ears and my mental habits that when I first found them my first fury made me write in the margin 'la niaiserie religieuse par excellence'—till finally my exasperation became quite fond of them, these sentences which turn the truth on its head!

This spirit of Renan, a spirit which *unnerves*, is one more burden for poor, sick, debilitated France!

p. 150. The note of pity, even respect, for everything suffering, mean, scorned, persecuted, sounds above all other notes (examples: Victor Hugo and Richard Wagner).

And to that is added the curse on pleasure (Baudelaire and Schopenhauer).

Who was the first *intelligent* follower of Wagner? Charles Baudelaire, the same who first understood Delacroix—that typical decadent, in whom a whole company of artists have seen themselves—he was perhaps also the last.

p. 151. I know these gentlemen inside out, in fact, I am fed up with them. One must be more radical; fundamentally they all lacked the main thing—'la force'.

The school of romanticism was followed in France by *l'école du document humain* (scientific hysteria, I call it). The expression is Edmond de Goncourt's. Result: the *scientific* interest of man in *himself*—the unscientific thing about it is the pleasure in exceptional cases.

There is no pessimistic art—art affirms. The Book of Job affirms—but Zola? and the Goncourts? The things they describe are hateful, but the reason *why* they describe them is that they have *pleasure* in what is hateful.

Would you believe it, Wagner's heroines, one and all, when you peel off the veneer of the heroic, are the spit and image of Madame Bovary!

p. 152. It comes to this, that Taine, apart from Burckhardt, has been for years the only man who sent me a hearty and sympathetic word about my writing.... Indeed, we are fundamentally drawn to each other, as three fundamental nihilists.

Pleasure in stinking.

p. 153. The best is lacking when the lack of egoism begins. Instinctively to choose what will harm *oneself*, to be tempted by 'disinterested' motives—this is more or less the definition of decadence. 'Not to seek one's own advantage'—that is the moral figleaf for a totally different state of affairs, a physiological one: 'I cannot *find* what is to my advantage any more'. Disgregation of the instincts!

I call an animal, a species, an individual ruined when it loses its instincts, when it chooses and *prefers* what is harmful to it... wherever the will to power is lacking, there is decadence.

Who alone has a reason to escape from reality into illusion? He who *suffers* in reality. But to suffer in reality means to be an unsuccessful part of it—Excess of pain-feelings over pleasure-feelings is the *cause* of that fictitious morality and religion: but such excess is the definition of decadence.

p. 154. To-day all over Europe there is a diseased sensitivity to pain, and an unpleasant lack of restraint in complaining of it, an over-tenderness, which tries to dress itself up as something more respectable with religion and philosophical nonsense—there is a specific cult of suffering.

A sort of *adjustment* to this bombardment with impressions takes place: man forgets how to act, he only *re-acts* to stimuli from without....

p. 155. What characterizes all *literary* decadence? Life is not any longer in the whole. The *word* becomes sovereign and stands out from the sentence, the *sentence* obscures and twists the meaning of the page, the *page* gains its life at the cost of the whole—the whole is no longer a whole. But that is the formula for any decadent style: every time anarchy of the parts, disgregation of the will, 'freedom of the individual' in moral terms.... The whole is no longer living: it is simply an aggregate, artificial, an artefact.

... the deep instinct for the fact that only *automatism* produces perfection in living and creating. But now we have gone to the opposite extreme, as we wished to—extreme self-consciousness, self-knowledge in man and in history: in practice we are thus as far as we could be from perfection in being, in doing and in willing—our desire, our will to knowledge even, is a symptom of the greatest decadence. We are striving for the opposite from what *strong* races and *strong* personalities desired—understanding is the end of activity.

p. 156. This humanity is not a whole, it is a variety of ascending and descending life-processes, which cannot be disentangled; it is not that it has a youth and then a maturity and then old age. Rather the layers are mixed up together—in a few thousand years there may well be younger types of men than any we can point to now. And on the other hand, decadence belongs to all periods of the history of man: everywhere there are waste-products and dying strains—it is itself a life-process, the elimination of declining and decaying parts.

Decadence is not a thing to be fought, it is absolutely necessary and is found in every period and every people.

p. 157. For such an attitude of mind (like Christianity) one must postulate the ideal man, suited exactly to it (for instance, Pascal).

... and Pascal no less, who only died thirty years too soon to pour scorn from his splendid and bitter soul on Christianity itself, as he had earlier and younger done on the Jesuits.

The most miserable example: the ruin of Pascal, who thought his reason was ruined by Original Sin, when it was only ruined by Christianity!

The Christian wants to *escape* from himself. . . .

Religion is a case of 'decay of the personality'. A sort of *fear* and *terror* at oneself—but also an extraordinary feeling of happiness and sublimity—among sick men the mere feeling of health is enough to create belief in God and His nearness.

'The proof by power': that is to say, a proposition is proved by its *effects* ('by its fruits' as the Bible naïvely puts it); what inspires us, *must* be true, what people are prepared to die for, *must* be true.

Even granted that Christianity could not be proved, Pascal considered it wise in the highest sense to be a Christian, in view of the fearful possibility that it *might* be true. To-day we find, as a sign how much Christianity has lost its terrors, another line of justification: that even if it were an error, we should draw the greatest possible advantage and enjoyment from that error—it seems, therefore, as though the belief is to be preserved for its consolatory effects—not from fear of a threatening possibility, then, but from fear that some of the charm of life will be lost This hedonistic modification, the 'proof from pleasure' is a sign of decadence, it replaces the 'proof from power', that is, from the *terrible* quality in Christianity, from *fear*. In fact, in this new version Christianity is nearing exhaustion: we are content with an opium-religion, because we have neither the power for the search, the struggle, the daring, the independence, nor for Pascalism, for that pensive self-scorn, that belief in human unworthiness, that terror of the 'perhaps-condemned'. . . .

p. 158. . . . even illness thought of as conditioned by morality, perhaps as punishment or as a test or as a state of grace, in which man becomes more perfect than he is in health (Pascal's viewpoint), sometimes even making oneself ill on purpose.

If the degenerate and sick man (the 'Christian') is to be valued as highly as the healthy one (the 'heathen'), or even more highly, according to Pascal's idea of illness and health, then the natural course of development is upset and the *unnatural* becomes law.

We are no Pascals, we are not specially interested in the 'salvation of our souls', in our own happiness, our own virtue— We have neither time nor curiosity enough to spin around our own axis so much. But there is a deeper distinction: we distrust all navel-watching because to us introspection is a *degenerate* form of psychology, and calls in question the whole psychological instinct—just as plainly as a painter's eye is degenerate if the will behind it is to see for seeing's sake.

We must never forgive Christianity that it ruined such men as Pascal. We must never cease to fight against precisely this in Christianity, that it has the will to destroy precisely the strongest and most noble men. . . . What do we fight in Christianity? That it tries to break the strongest, to discourage their courage, to take advantage of their bad and tired times, to turn their proud security into restlessness and pangs of conscience, that it knows how to turn the noblest instincts to poison and sickness, until their strength, their will to power turns backwards, turns against itself—until the strongest are ruined by the excesses of self-denigration and self-laceration: that terrible kind of ruin of which Pascal is the most famous example.

p. 159. . . . what does moral fervour *mean*? I ask psychologically, and physiologically too. Pascal, for example . . . is it not a particular kind of *sensibility*, which does not understand the cause of its many pain-feelings, but thinks it explains them with *moral hypotheses*? Morality as the only scheme of interpretation which prevents a man despising himself—a kind of *pride*, then?

One soul is not strong enough to take up with it so many details of knowledge, so much meanness and baseness. You must tell yourself a pack of lies, so as not to lose your sense of power. But Pascal and I are different. I do not need to discard the small miserable details. I do not want to make a God out of myself!

When I talk of Plato, Pascal, Spinoza and Goethe, I know that their blood runs in my veins—I am proud to speak the truth about them—the family is good enough not to need any imagined virtues or any concealments.

The concept 'sin' was invented, together with the appropriate instrument of torture, the concept 'free-will', to confuse the instincts, to make our distrust of our instincts second nature! And the concept 'the altruist', 'the self-denier', the real sign of decadence, being attracted by what is harmful, being unable to find what is advantageous to one, finally, the instinct of self-destruction—all this was made into a measure of value, into 'duty', 'holiness', the 'divine' in man! Finally—and this is the most terrible of all—in the concept

'good man' they took the part of all that was weak, sick, failed, discontented with itself, all that was destined to be destroyed—and upset the whole process of selection, and made an ideal out of the very opposite of the proud and well-adapted men, the affirming, yea-saying men, who were certain of the future and guaranteed it—these were christened 'evil'. And all that was believed as *morality*! Écrasez l'infâme!

p. 160. I myself, an opponent of Christianity *de rigueur*, am far from bearing a grudge at anyone for what is the fate of thousands of years.

p. 161. Dionysos against the 'Crucified': there you have the contrast. It is *not* a matter of the degree of martyrdom, but the martyrdom has a different meaning. Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, conditions the pain, the destruction, the will to extinction. In the other case suffering, the 'crucified as the innocent one', is counted an objection to life, a condemnation of it. You can see—the problem is concerned with the meaning of suffering: whether a Christian meaning or a tragic one. In the first case suffering is the way to a divine existence: in the second existence is *divine enough* anyway to justify an immensity of suffering. The tragic man affirms the deepest suffering: he is strong, full, divine enough for that; the Christian denies the most happy lot on earth: he is weak, poor, disinherited enough to suffer at life in any form. The god on the Cross is a curse on life, a pointer to our salvation from it—Dionysos torn into pieces is a *promise* of life: it is eternally reborn and will return from destruction.

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